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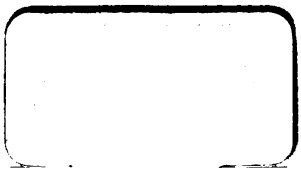

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WAR FLAMES

BY
JOHN CURTIS UNDERWOOD

New York
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TO FRANCE
AND THE REST

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The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to various books, magazines and newspaper articles, notably, *A Journal of Impressions in Belgium* by May Sinclair, *My Year of the Great War* by Frederic Palmer, *The Dark Forest* by Hugh Walpole, *The Red Horizon* and *The Great Push* by Patrick Macgill, *My Home in the Field of Honor* by Francis Wilson Huard, *Ten Million Refugees* by Richard Washburn Child and *Four Weeks in the Trenches* by Fritz Kreisler, from which material for many of his poems has been adapted directly, in part.

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FOREWORD

Now that the world is dark, the ways are foul, the weaklings trembling tread;
Now that war's breakers roil the seas from beach to beach with dead;
Now that all light is darkened; new shadows in the air,
Where death stamps earth with flying feet defile dawn's altar there,
And fairy cobwebs filmed with dew, and children's wondering eyes,
Are blackness, blood and emptiness where mothers agonize.

Now that the lights are dimned, all outer dark rolls near new tides of night:
Now that the earth spawns blood and hate and steel and dynamite,
Now men grope bent in cellars blind down raw trench trails of war
For some new clew to life we lost who served its Minotaur.
Now that the older nations there must wrestle on their knees,
With angels on that flaming stair; art thou less loved than these?

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BELGIUM

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LIFE

An aeroplane soars in the sun, and a spatter of shrapnel breaks into bursting bubbles of life below it.
An English monitor miles at sea is shelling the German lines near Ostend.
A bugle startles a skylark to singing as a troop of Belgian cavalry takes its morning exercise on the sand.
And a Belgian mother in black brings her baby down to play, where the land and sea are meeting in little children's claspings and lispings of love.

She lies near the rise of the dunes where the sandpinks still shine in the sun.
But the boy marches bravely on to the tide line to build his sand fort in the fringe of the waves.
He is sturdy and serious, blonde as Albert the King, and square-browed and square-chinned and square-jawed.
He scoops out his trenches and piles high his citadel, planting his own little Belgian flag on the brow of the mound.
He builds steadily and precisely but slowly and awkwardly too, for his left hand is lost at the wrist.
The mother lies on her back on the dune and lets the wind fan her face and the sun warm her flesh.

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She opens dull eyes full of pain as old as life itself, and tries to let the brightness and the blueness of the skies soak into them.

She tries to count the clouds and the sandpinks that cluster near her, as men count sheep to conjure sleep to them,

And she shudders and turns and lies dry-eyed and quivering on the dune, clutching dry sand that crumbles in her hands.

She rises and paces, a black sentinel of sorrow, along the gray skyline of the dune,

And the boy gets to his feet and shades his eyes with his single hand as the monitor swings nearer and fires faster.

And the last echo of her guns is gone, and the mother is still staring with eyes of intolerable love and longing toward Louvain,

And the boy is still crouching, building in the sun his citadel and its outworks awkwardly and persistently.

For he is life that with maimed hands must still build on, as God builds stars, the soul's strong places of tomorrow's battlefields.

March 4, 1916.

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MINERS IN BELGIUM

They thirst, they hunger and they sweat, half naked,
blackened, stained with night;
In iron mines and coal pits prisoned where their war
lords their fetters forge.
Filth feeds on them; fear bleeds from them the brains, the
hopes, the faith of men.
Their food becomes a drug at last. Not morphine, heroin,
cocaine,
A darker slavery of habit ordains that God may die today.

For they are slaves in darkness sealed, and mangled wills
that once were men;
The dying dreams, prayers, sanctities and passions women
lived to love;
Shrewdness and humor, courage, joy; all broken, rotting
and reduced,
Like the last lust of hate itself, to pain's brute infamy.
Their lips
Unmask a sick wolf's fangs. Their voice sinks to dumb
slaver where they die.

And in their darkness they remain a rotting wound upon
the world,
Not Belgium's here to bear alone, but something black
that shall infect

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Women and men who suffer this wherever greed is God,
and fear
Has murdered faith in mobs that meet to pray for peace
before the hour
God who is justice weighs it out, to each his earnings
utterly.

Here they are sacrificed for us. For nothing less suffices time
To wake the sleepers of the world to the crude weight of
wickedness
That Man's machines have multiplied through two new
centuries of shame,
Of greed enthroned and insolent wherever street meets
street. They die;
And dying, in the deathlessness of torment, make tomor-
row sure.

Each step they drag, each breath they draw brings near
the hour when men must choose,
And for their choice stand forth to die, holding back noth-
ing more and more,
Till the filled scales of justice sway and tremble in the
test supreme.
And then these miners' murdered souls remembered shall
be mightier
Than the machines that eat them up. And one, foreseeing
this, is smiling.

September 2, 1915.

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PALAIS DES FETES

THERE are thousands of refugees in the Palais des Fetes
that Ghent was proud of yesterday.
It stands in green fields that once spelled peace and plenty,
where tall poplars wigwag terror now on every wind
that arrives.
The winds rattle the windows of this huge house of shaken
happiness insistently.
They raise lingering perfumes of forgotten flower fetes
in its garrets, where white faced watchers in black
besiege the windows.
They whip gay acres of swaying begonias that bloom for
war to waste; they whip gray dust into gray faces,
drifting like driven cattle still before them.

There are ten thousand now, bedded like beasts in straw
around the Central Court.
They lie sleeping sodden and dumb, and dead with fatigue,
sprawling gray black heaps of bulbs of human souls
that the great gardener has gathered here in haste.
It is a new nursery of human suffering, human hope,
courage and kindness, and flowers of faith deferred,
And some day after the storms of hate and horror are
ended, the flowers will bloom and begin to grow here
fairer than ever before.

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There is pity and pitiableness beyond any utterance, in the people lying fallen here, and in the men and women met from Belgium and abroad to minister to them.

Thousands have come leaving all behind but the black on their backs, or a clock, or a camera, or a vase, or a violin in their hands.

They have left all but the dust of Belgium, fouling faces shadowed by sights and sounds of Belgium raped and tortured, that wakeful bodies and brains still conceive, and twitching lips still tremble to.

And for them there is nothing any man or woman on earth can give or can do today.

Only a crust of bread and a cup of water from time to time to prolong and intensify a dry eyed unending agony.

The rest have left hope behind them with their broken hearts in houses that burning by fire can no more cleanse than kindness can restore.

Some have suffered longer and are stronger to suffer all they have seen and heard and told and shared with others.

There are sodden human dregs of despair that war has brayed in mortars of fire and steel, till the red sponges of war seem to suck the last heart beats of blood from them.

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And there are some nursing something human still in the little living body of a dog or a cat or a rabbit or a bird, that they have carried far and still cling to.

And in many greed and hatred are waking to life again, like the vice and the vermin thawed from torpor to breed horribly in this stained bedding of straw.

There is no light in all Belgium, in all earth, tonight, to cleanse and to heal this new putrifying sore upon the bleeding flesh of man;

Only deep sleep and some diviner anæsthetic that God drips drop by drop, day by day, from His sponge of stars in night, to allay and to heal the hurts of the hearts of men.

And two younger lovers lie asleep smiling hand in hand across the space of straw between them.

And a man's arm goes out unconsciously round his wife as unconsciously she tosses and turns to him.

And a child nestles nearer to its mother and sighs as it rustles in the straw.

And that one tender sigh in innumerable dry rustlings of the straw already fecund with life that breeds everywhere in warmth and in night, is truth ineffable.

February 29, 1916.

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THE LORD'S SUPPER

THEY come to the bare tables patiently as they filed past high altars in her ruined cathedrals at Christmas or Easter.

And they have fasted long before coming to this last low mass in the middle of ruined Belgium.

Their hands and their faces are foul with her as the hearts and the senses of the men that marched them here.

They come from the highways and the hedges, and they have no wedding garment of mirth such as Christ made at Cana.

They have no wine such as Christ made, but coffee black and bitter, steaming and cooling in soiled and in clumsy cups.

There are two dry slices of rye bread for each man and woman, and one for each child that cries for more.

And the time between coming and going is less than the space a priest prays till the bells rings and he raises the Host on high.

And out in the night of Belgium, in bursting shells God's bells announce another midnight mass.

March 2, 1916.

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THE SHRINE

THERE is a cross roads somewhere in Belgium where the shells have made a shambles of stone and of mortar.
They have pitted the earth with a pestilence of fire and steel, and they have not spared the roads and trees that marched with them.
They have dammed and defiled the flow of rivers where women laved linen in sunlight.
Only a shrine is left at the crossways where a Virgin still holds her scarred child in her hands.

Her eyes are wide and wistful with old agonies of some sculptor of earth's dark ages.
Her lips are dumb as the driven heart of the woman kneeling before her.
Her child looks down on the martyred body of this child that war is making a mother,
With the wild eyes of dumb beasts that suffer and go mad, and the sick smile of a soul men murdered in the night.

The girl kneels in the mud of the road and the crumbling mortar.
The rain beats on her bare head and splashes the salt tears that trickle down her cheeks.

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Her eyes are fixed on the Virgin's eyes in an agony of dumb
despair and of desperate hope deferred.
She is waiting for a miracle of help and of healing, in a
land whose only miracle is the courage that bears
despair and still lives to struggle on.

February 12, 1916.

SOEUR CECILE

Sixty-two years of prayer and placidness had folded her
hands before her,
And lowered her eyes and her eyelids like dim lamps
behind sanctuaries.
The Prioress who preceded her had clipped her hair that
fell close to her feet at eighteen,
Seeing the shining length of a serpent of gold flaming in
Eden and severed from her head for a moment,
And the girl bowed her maimed head and prayed sobbing
for peace, because a lover with his lies had maimed
her heart.

Forty-four years she was wasting away to a wraith of
faith in a cell whose key she had cast away.
War opened the doors of the world to her terribly and
tumultuously.
And a thousand women who had died to give her birth
began to struggle passionately to live again in her,

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As she plodded with her nuns through the long pilgrimage of despair from Malines to La Panne,
Lifting her eyes in the open to aeroplanes at sunrise,
And to sterner sanctities of stars shining through shattered roofs on battered altars and broken bodies of men.

All the world was new to her as war and as wonderful as it was terrible.
And her soul grew as her eyes ranged through wider vistas of ruins redeemed by beauty.
Till there was room for a thousand women wakening and quickening in her,
And for children that ceased to sob as they learned to smile back at her.
Roses began to bloom faintly in her cheeks and lips at a crêche in La Panne.
And she found a rosary there with a bead of love in each bed that her fingers lingered on furtively,
As mothers in their spirits' pregnancy bend stealthily to kiss the small garments they make.
And she moved among them smiling, making and mending small garments of flesh to the service and glory of God.

July 19, 1916.

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INFANTRY TRAINING

On a slice of sand in Belgium between the devil and the deep sea her soldiers are drilling,
Horses come splashing from the waves with their riders clamped to them naked and shining like Centaurs.
A battery of 75s from Creusot rolls through the ruts of its leaders toward the firing line near Furnes.
On the drift line a company of farm lads, road makers, street cleaners, begins to fix bayonets.

Their feet stamp deep in the sand as their flashing steel stabs the air and the forms of air that fight with them.
They have swung spade and dung fork, scythe and axe, mattock and stone hammer for centuries and their sinews are fit for it.
They have cleaned up muck heaps and middens, manured her fields, dug and drained her ditches, swept away the wastage of the land since Belgium was, for this.
And long years and generations in the open under her sky leave them at last the last masters of her destiny.

They are an integral part of her, ready and prepared to suffer and survive through all her strivings and sufferings.

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They stand sweating, breathing deep, clutching with hard
hands the tools she lends them to grave in the flesh
and the minds of men her mind and her will to live.
They stand on her last frontier of life between the sand
hills and the sea in the sunrise,
Waiting till the last red wastage of war is swept away to
till the fields their fathers tilled.

The tide turns as the sun rises, and the waves come
marching and flooding farther out of the sea,
Driving the flotsam and seadrift and the wastage of winds,
ever farther and farther before them.
And new companies and older battalions are coming,
marching and spreading and forming into line behind
them.
And the Word locks their ranks at last, and at last they
are ready.
And at last they are marching, treading slow and straight
past this gray sea gate of fate and defeat,
Into the future of freedom their own hard hands and their
fathers' hands have measured and made for them.

March 4, 1916.

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LA LIBRE BELGIQUE

SOMEWHERE in Belgium in a cellar three men are at work,
Inking rollers, setting type, wedging stickfuls and half columns of courage into a steel frame on an ink stained slab of stone,
Lit by a dusty dark lantern on a barrel head by a bolted door.

There is nothing definitely distinguished or obviously heroic about the voices or the faces of these three young men.
But their eyes have looked death in the face and learned to despise him as they all three despise the Germans and Germany.
All the old patient pertinacity of Flanders and Brabant that outlived Alva and the Inquisition is indomitable in them.

They go on throwing their type and hammering their wedges wearily and alertly.
And the sound of German guns pounding at Loos, muffled by shattered walls and floors in ruins comes down to them,
Mingling with the throw and recoil of the rusty press they begin to feed with stained and mildewed pieces of paper.

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And the press seems a living thing with a pulse and a voice of its own that is Belgium's and the world's.

Eighty-two times in twenty months this last syllable of the creed of freedom for mankind has uttered itself.

Week after week unfailing this word of Belgium free forever, has spoken to the starving, the despairing and the dying, who in death still hear her voice of victory.

Brussels, Antwerp, Liege and more than seventy more of her towns and cities, were numbered on this new honor roll whose type is set in shadows.

Fifty thousand francs of German promises to pay has not yet bought one traitor to the truth of a nation that still saves its soul in cellars.

Week after week they print their pieces of paper that not all of Essen's engines, not all the shells and swords forged on fires lit since time began, can blot out or obliterate.

December 12, 1916.

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GERMANY

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ENTRAINING

DRESDEN'S Haupt Banhof clangs like a tunnel bridged and roofed by giants. It jubilates.

A regiment of Saxon jaegers is entraining in two long sections.

The young soldiers are wreathed with flowers; their rifles garlanded with roses.

Women and children bring presents, propitiating war with chocolate, sausage, pipes, playing cards, Jugend, Simplicisismus, rings and bracelets with blond hair in them.

An oiler elbows through the groups of women clustered about car windows.

A news vendor vociferates of fights on the frontier. He tells of the unconscionable and impudent audacity of Belgians who resist the Kaiser's armies.

Men buy papers and pull them apart. They forget their mothers and sweethearts utterly.

At last the order comes that the women must stand back.

Smiling, sobbing, kissing through windows, waving their handkerchiefs, cursing the English wildly they begin to go.

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The young men loosen their belts and their uniform coats of gray green cloth like mullen leaves.
They drink their girls' healths in station beer and kimmel from pocket flasks.
They light their sweethearts' cigarettes as the train hangs fire.
A half hour passes and after that another endless half hour.

On the cars *Zum Paris* is chalked in straggling script between the Prussian flags and Saxon colors.
The young men begin to think of the city of pleasure and the women waiting there for them.
They start to tell lewd stories as the dregs of life that war is stirring, eddy upwards.
They boast and they lie of loves they never knew and never hoped to know before.

Suddenly a slow tremor stirs the long train. The machinery moving smoothly before it and behind, has shifted to a new impetus of departure.
The men's hearts stir with it and leap to delight in the glory of war.
Rifle barrels crowned with helmets appear at crowded windows as the wheels begin to turn.
And the noise of engines and wheels is drowned in the sound of the shouting that rises and quickens as the train moves faster and faster.

June 9, 1915.

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THE REGIMENT

It moves like a link in the chain of steel that fifty years have forged for Prussia.
It goes clanking over the hills toward the coal and iron lands of France and Belgium.
There is iron in the heavy hobnailed boots that hammer the ground at each stride,
There are tubes of steel and keys to destruction that shift and threaten with each lunge of the lumbering shoulders.
The helmets are metal spiked. There is steel in the officers' swords and the Teuton truculence of their thoughts and their orders.

It is a link in the chain of steel that drags with it the huge mortars and the massive machinery of murder that Essen evolves.
And it functions forward faster in the organic growth of steel and the will of steel that imposes new laws upon earth.
And the ripple that runs through it is one with the stir of tides and the thud of the blood through men's hearts to today's consummation.
And it surges over the hills to the day when a spray of steel shall sweep in a storm of fire from the sea to the mountains.

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The men's faces are hard and wire drawn like their straining muscles under the torsions of their toiling.

They spell the will of a race that has waked too late and finds the earth occupied and fenced from it.

They strain with the convulsive straining of brutes that lunge at the walls of the corral that surrounds them.

They set with the cold conceit of men who say they can batter their way with dynamite and melenite through all barriers that the mind of man has set up.

Something stronger than steel lives within them and thrusts them on with each breath that they draw and each beat of their hearts.

It is more than the will to live in the creed of their philosophers of force and of frightfulness.

It is more than the sense that self is supreme in a world of force that makes of their nation a more monstrous and menacing ego.

It is more than their slow and deep drinking and swine eating sensuality that wakes from its welter of women in Berlin, and turns to war as man's work.

It is the will of the world to grow that evolves its types, and tests them turn by turn in the stern and unending warfare between matter and spirit.

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Gladiators of today, the regiment hammers on its way for a day regardless of philosophies.

They are hungry and thirsty and bone tired. They look for nothing more than food, drink and sleep at the end of the day's march.

They are a living weapon that civilization has forged to break or be broken, but they reck not of that.

They march to meet the sunset and the hard lips whisper "*wunder shon*" and soften as they see it.

One of them as the sun sinks murmurs "Hail, Cæsar, we who are about to die salute thee."

And for the space of a second he feels one millionth part of the beauty and splendor and terror of life and the tragedy his masters and their millions are enacting.

June 15, 1915.

THE BATTERY

Six thirty centimeter mortars from Skoda are lurking behind a wind break.

There is a brown wound in the green meadow. A trodden path trickles from it.

Two huge hobnailed boot heels are clicking restlessly outside a hidden hole in the ground.

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A bell at the end of a wire rings, and artillery men leap to attention,
A bearded mouth, muttering, translates code words from a Taube a mile in the air,
A boy officer, crouching behind him relays the ranges and lateral angles.

Smiling boys bring shells in wicker crates and instantly uncage them.
Squat thirty centimeter muzzles tilt up to forty-five degrees to pound some place unseen and charted precisely.
Round the neck of one a classicist from Munich has hung a yellow wreath of May flowers for sacrifice.
Today they are high priests of death and hate, and they know it and feel it.

June 2, 1915.

HEADQUARTERS

Batteries of rapid fire typewriters drilled all day, are relayed through the night.
Telephone wires focus here in the army's brain like nerves in the ear of a man,
Sweating telegraphists are swiftly translating sounds in a secret code into legible sight,
In the map room four staff officers are constantly shifting colored pins from square to square on their chess board.

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Outside high powered motor cars arrive and depart swiftly and with certainty.
An aeroplane sinks to the ground half a mile to the rear. The observer brings his camera swiftly.
In the dark room, negatives of new enemy positions emerge in a new organic growth of the chemistry of thought that is hate.
In an adjutant's office spies are cross-questioned and their replies card-catalogued.

Everywhere there is a sense of machinery moving smoothly to adjust itself to shocks.
The men move like machines. Here and there a twitching of nerves nears the breaking point.
In the field marshal's room a council of war proceeds around a long green table.
One of the younger officers has gambled furiously before the war.
He has come in from the front half dazed with weariness and horror.

Insensibly the group before him fades into the haze around a gaming table at Bad Homburg.
He hears the call of the croupiers and the click of the ball. He sees the stakes on the table.
As he watches, the ball turns to a shell that explodes.

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It strews the cloth with dismembered limbs of men and broken and bleeding hearts of women.
And the stacks of bank notes before him become leprous scraps of paper pledging the present and future of starving nations and generations.

June 8, 1915.

TAGS

Two men kneel in a shell proof dug-out east of the Yser canal.
From the roof a smoking lantern swings and sweats.
One of them writes with a fountain pen tallying names and numbers,
The other tosses metal tags one by one into a coffin slowly filling.

One by one the rosters of the vanished regiments have spelled their passing,
The sergeant's voice grows raw and numb. It stumbles and recovers itself,
His eyes close and open and confuse the numbers that his mouth repeats.
The captain's head sags and rolls; the pen falls from his fingers that grope and clutch and scramble in the slime on the floor for it.
Sometimes a tag falls in the mud there and is buried there.

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The tags are tarnished metal with the numbers and letters of regiments and the privates' numbers.
There are brighter bits of aluminum here and there with the officers' names and their titles.
They are pierced and blistered and clipped and chipped by bullets, and marred more than any other money on earth.
Some are scored and seared and shattered by shrapnel and lydite.
Some are twisted and hammered and fused together indistinguishably like the lives they stand for.

The sergeant calls and the captain tallies the Kaiser's wasted money,
They call and tally the wasted lives and the world's aborted ambitions.
They call and tally the lost loves and the ceaseless longings of women.
The water seeps into the ooze on the floor and drips from timbers overhead as persistently the guns pound on.
The clinking coffin fills with tags, and the men know that tomorrow they must begin again.
It is a sacrament of murder shared by two blind priests in the night.

June 5, 1915.

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DEATH IN THE AIR

LONDON lies still and dumb under the night that crouches over her,
High in the sky through mist that hides the stars comes a drumming of motors madly whirring in limbo,
Death and the fear that fills the void of night, are coming in new monsters made by man to smite the monster city.

From the most eastern outposts and eyes in air of England's island camp of iron in arms ton
Word is heard and relayed of the raid that a. ves, and her millions awake and make them ready,
Marksmen and mothers all in their places, standing waiting, pale and still and patiently implacable.

High in the sky through mist that melts, the huge war vulture's wings are whirling, spiraling above the city's circuit.
And a searchlight shaft like God's forefinger, followed by another and yet others, moves groping through the void and pointing toward the drone of death in darkness.
And the eyes and hearts of the millions below are moving, mounting and sinking with it as their parted lips and straining lungs are moving.

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Now in the zenith a Zeppelin dragged from the dark like some small silvery cocoon of horror that never shall loose one wasp of hate to hurt the earth,

Hangs in full sight in the night as the shrapnel's pale inverted hail begins to pelt and beat about it.

And a surf of sound that shakes and rends the sky with bursting steel is thundering and rising round it.

Prisoned and impaled by light, this last war dragon of the Rheingold's hoarders, hovers quivering in its vortex in the void,

Form[illegible]s of hate for the swift-stabbing of steel destru[illegible], stealing closer, rending ether on all sides at once.

So the cave men of Mercia and France once fought the last flying sea-lizards in their air at night with torches, javelins, raw flints from slings and flaming arrows.

And still it hangs, the pale storm center of a cyclone of ruin that, rending night, has whirled its mates away from it.

And from all sides boy aviators on their war birds with their bullets and their bombs come closing in and bearing down on it,

And like a sentient living thing it seems to sense their coming and to shiver as it staggers raggedly and dips and sags.

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All the eyes of London now are feeling it falling or about to fall,

All the mind and might of England and her farthest outposts of the earth and air have willed its fall and destined it.

All the old embittered brute that hides in steel, the far inflated pride, the cynic science God let Germany reveal, no more one second can sustain it.

For now He sows His spores of life and death, and freedom and blind slavery for men and monsters more and less than men, on air and all her currents.

And all the hopes and hates and horrors of the score of Prussians pitching and reeling there avail no more to stay or save, than blood drops dripping from one butchered baby's brain five thousand feet below.

And the warm breath of London's millions still exhales in vortices of fire and steel; and suddenly that silvery cocoon of hate and death is falling flaming.

And from stressed lips and houses hoarse and heaving, on the streets below, rises a roar that jubilating swells to joy to earth tomorrow, that tonight all London's millions madly know.

January 13, 1917.

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ATROCITIES

INTO Belgium in a gray green flood the marching regiments are pouring.
They sweep with the surge of a tidal wave filling and wrecking villages and cities.
For behind them a void of greed and hatred has been stirred as the sea stirs when volcanoes vomit from the ocean's bottom.
And old and abysmal shames and horrors are spewed from the slime of sixty sunken centuries.

An old man hangs and drips from fifty wounds at a cross roads sign post.
Bodies of boys butchered and tortured are charring in the smoking ashes of a hundred houses.
A nun stripped and raped and maddened runs screaming through a forest.
A mother clutching her hungry baby swoons on her bed with both her breasts hacked off.

A red cross nurse, the cords of both hands cut, hugging an eyeless child plods on interminably toward Louvain.
Five little girls, fingerless and handless, fall fainting and dying around an altar in a ruined church.

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A priest with his finger nails and his tongue torn forth lies quivering on the floor in the form of a cross.
A Belgian soldier hangs writhing crucified on the door by German bayonets.

They have mangled the souls of the murderers and torturers as well as those of the sufferers.
They have distorted their minds and wrecked their wills as a bursting shell wrecks and distorts the broken body of a man.
They have mangled and distorted the mind and the soul of a nation in its day of wrath and judgment.
For the bottom of a sea of obscene consciousness has been heaved into sight.
And things inhuman and hidden have been hurled from the night into the knowledge of men that made them.

VIVISECTION

GOD whose mind made men and Germans must be German minded too at times,
He has vivisected brutes, evolving men from truceless unrelenting wars of fang and talon.
So He tortured dogs and guinea pigs in Germany, Rome, London, Paris, Petrograd, two years ago:
Out of agonies of ages made His modern miracles of Surgery and science specialized.

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Out of suppurating flesh of beasts today, distilled His anti-
toxins for all time's despairs:
Out of syphilis fashioned Ehrlich, and new healing for all
nations.
He who lesser lives devotes forever to an iron service,
From His soldiers' gangrened flesh in France sublimes a
surer cure for every gangrened horror in man's hands
and heart.

He has vivisected smaller lives in Belgium, Serbia, Poland.
German soldiers spiked their babies on red bayonets and
held them writhing high in air for all the world to
see;
For earth's cynics, slaves and wasters, business men and
idle women, poets, children, to envision and inherit.
German scientists once showed school children pasteboard
boxes filled with lepidoptera spiked on pins in ranks.
Red efficiency that rips house walls like pasteboard, chloro-
forms a butterfly lest downy wings be tarnished as
they die;
But it has no anæsthetics for these Belgian babies stabbed
and shell-torn while its German Herods' wounds are
waiting.

He who in his scale of Kosmos sees all Germany one mil-
limeter larger than one Belgian baby;
Vivisects today and always, not his lesser lives alone:

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Vivisects not flesh and blood and nerve of France and England, Russia, Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey, Italy, and Germany only; but their mind and spirit.

And the center of that map of pain and torture table for the world holds Germany today in torment for the rest.

Winter is the white-robed surgeon and the titan vivisector numbing all things but the body's brutish shrinking in his hands.

Winter numbs the mob. Behind him lurks the fear of lives tubercular and starved, breeding and feeding in filth and weakness, where once was full-fleshed force forever and forever.

February 21, 1916.

SHADOWS

THE shadows gather hovering like vultures' wings over a land whose soul lies dying.

They breed in knit brows, around tightened lips where teeth flashed and eyes gleamed once in love and laughter and delight.

They grow in the grime of the trenches, in stagnant ditches of shade till a shell bursts, scattering a nest of horror, hurled in the eye of the sun.

They spread in widening mourning bands and broader borders on letters and printed cards of mourning.

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They gather in deeper hollows under the eyes of war worn women and hungry children.

They flow into new made graves of young and old, and the clods that fall on them cannot bury them nor dam their spread.

They are grim in the grayer faces of the Kaiser and his older generals.

They pollute the earth at Essen under new monster idols of hate that the hands of men have hewed from steel.

They ripple in every wave on German coasts with the menace of death from the sea that is to come.

They are sealed in violin cases and silent grand pianos, black coffins and mordant sarcophagi of the soul of harmony that Germany destroys.

They lurk in the chemists' empty and dusty test tubes like the black microbes of murder that another's frenzy of frightfulness devises.

They lurk in a slow necrosis of knowledge and nobility in all her lecture halls and class rooms of service to the world.

They breed in the hearts and brains of millions of men and women once happy and human.

They fester in the souls of spies and police and all who pay them; they are black in the secret printings, plottings and slayings of revolt that rises and strikes in the dark.

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They sway in the sunlight where weeds grow and men wither in neglected gardens,

They have made a vast cobble-stoned parade ground a thing of beauty in the summer, with the growth of grain there.

For out of horror comes hope and subtle shiftings of the weight of stone and steel that has made of Germany today the world's huge prison house.

They fall on empty aisles and shrouded counters of shops of sudden surfeit where facile waste lies sacrificed to vaster waste.

They hover round single lights in dim alcoves of lust and luxury, like memories in the minds of starving prostitutes of days and nights of love devouring.

For her cities have grown old in a year, and her soldier lads and girl nurses and war brides of hunger and hopelessness shall never in all God's years be children again.

The shadows gather around the minds of men who have planned for war persistently as they have made its munitions, and caused these things to be.

They gather in the corners of roofless hangars and railroad stations and storehouses where the air bombs of the allies have exploded.

They gather in empty galleries of mines where the steel strength and the vital fuel of the nation and the slice of earth she stole are spent as her human strength is spent.

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They gather and grow and stain the whitest walls in the halls of huge hospitals and crude clearing houses of torment, deformity and death.

They gather and hover over the fields where air ships fly to darken the days and the nights of women working there.

For the flame of life that blazed abroad there in the center of Europe and fused her strength to steel and the bursting of bombs that eviscerate earth itself, begins to fall.

The shadows grow and the cinders choke it wherever a fire burns and a light fails in an empire of emptiness grown old and cold and crumbling over night.

For this Germany has had her hour in the sun in the sight of East and West, and the eyes of gods and devils that her War-lord makes of men.

For this red harvest of slayers all earth has devised and toiled for, through ages of evolution that makes man more and less than utter brute;

Till in the charted courses of stars and all recurrent tides and seasons, men and women may walk forth freely in the light again for the renewing of the earth.

February 16, 1916.

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ESSEN

More than seven score thousand men are toiling there
at Essen,
Working day and night in double shifts in haste infuriate,
Round blast furnaces that roaring flare and stab the air
with fear at midnight.
Tilting crucibles are pouring molten steel like hydra's
hair to sear the shadows.
Fiery serpents fall and flame along the moulds and slowly
lapse to torpor.

Where they toil in desperation they are shaping sorrow
there at Essen.
While they cast shell casings, drill truncated cylinders for
monster mortars that they put together;
While they prime time fuses, file machine gun gears and
rake their bores with circling rifling;
They are welding will to chains of steel that only steel as
strong shall ever sever.
Into bullets and to shrapnel they are crystallizing ruin.

They are casting loss and havoc. Huge steel billets are
the devil's dice of death at Essen.
And their crucibles devouring are his ladles that all Ger-
many have gutted.

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Into them they cast the riches of their mines and the steel
strength of cities,
Casting faster all their cattle, all the growth of grain and
earth's abundance;
All the frenzied flesh of soldiers, old men, boys, defectives,
weaklings, maniacs marched to battle.

They have cast the hearts and hopes and long despairs of
women there at Essen.
These they crushed to crimson welter, flayed and shredded
where triphammers tirelessly are falling clanging.
There they fuse their prayers and tears and fears
that stab them as the pangs of child birth stab
them.
There they cast the glorious years of all that Germany for
music won and science.
There they cast their mutilated sanctities that fright-
fulness and force might triumph.

They cast honor there disowned, and all the lies that
wasted, wait to wound them there at Essen.
Toiling to uproot the earth and righteousness and freedom
with a madman's ammunition,
Seeking to o'ershadow sunlight with their Zeppelins and
turn back tides with submarine torpedoes.
All that suns and tides have wrought since earth was fire
must war against them.

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Maddened, reeling, Germany is whirling east and west
and north and south as armies eat her substance.
And the vortex of her ruin is this town of soot and steel
where naked workmen
Fight with fire and fail, as fail the gun crews in the turret
of a Dreadnaught mined and sinking.

June 12, 1915.

POISONED WELLS

SOMEWHERE in Africa south of the line there is heat haze
on interminable plains.
And the dust devils dance there drunkenly and sun
struck.
In the dongas and clefts of the rocks the shade shrinks
inch by inch and hour by hour,
Where the vipers lie and sun themselves, and little
lizards flicker in and out of the light alertly and
unheard.

There is no sound here at noon but the minute ripple and
plash of sand grains wind swept and pitching from the
fringe of the well,
And the interminable buzzing of clouds of flies settling
and gorging, and rising from the bodies of a black
woman and her boy and baby girl,

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Naked and starved, bloated and festering, and grinning
in the ghastliness of ultimate and intolerable torments.
And above, black against the blue, vultures hover, as they
hover over every sky in Europe today with eyes like
the eyes in the Taubes and Zeppelins.

November 1, 1916.

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FRANCE

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THE SIDING

The long train stumbles panting down the long siding and starts to drink.
Side doors fly open with the massed precision of rifle breeches in line unlocking.
Men come flying out of third class carriages suddenly as empty shells are ejected,
And the impact of feet on the earth thuds like the sound of a thousand gun butts grounding arms.

The white dust of Champagne powders bare heads and baggy red trousers.
It gets into throats that have choked in the desert and throttled down thirst like a beast.
Women who have watched the rest pass, have stood all day waiting for the Zouaves from the South.
Willing to bear hunger and heat, longing to give all that they have, be it never so little.

It is the season of fruits and there are early apples, raspberries, blackberries, melons and plums,
Cider hoarded from last year, cows' milk and goats' milk, syrups, grosaille and grenadine,

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And everywhere there is wine as red as the blood of France
that spills itself as freely,
And some, who have nothing more to give, have baked
their apronfuls of bread and dumbly follow the
others.

And the poorest and richest of all and the smallest children
give flowers away;
Crimson poppies, blue cornflowers and daisies, tied into
little living tricolor cockades.
And the men from the desert eye the children and the
flowers with a wistful and childlike wonder.
And they smile as the children smile at something strange
and beautiful in France that has flowered by this
siding of life.

July 8, 1916.

THE ROSE GARDEN

There is an old rose garden on the frontier that the
French won back.
It lies hidden on a hillside behind a burned and ruined
chateau.
Charred and crumbling stumps alone remain of the groves
that rose around it,
Between them rude crosses, roughly carved, mark the
graves of fallen soldiers.

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The roses flame in the blaze of June and their fragrance is
fused with sunshine.
Bees have found them and drunken with fragrance they
cling to them.
Butterflies hover above them like flowers of the air that
float on the wind.
A soldier fresh from the filth of trenches lies asleep in the
shadow where the grass grows long.

The shadow crawls across the sun dial in the center from
hour to hour.
The rose petals fall on the sleeper and he stirs and smiles
in his sleep.
Four of his comrades, finger to lip, come and cover
him from head to foot with a riot of red blossoms.
And he dreams of the souls of the dead women of France
whose dust has made these roses splendid and
inviolate.

June 13, 1915.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION

Two arms rest side by side on a bed in a base hospital at
Compiegne.
His is knotted and brown and bound with a bandage at
the wrist,

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Hers is smooth and white and fresh as her face and her youth is fresh,
And the bright blood running through the transfusion tube that is testing them.

He lies like an inert muscle of France strained and spent beyond rest, beyond stirring or sensation.
She is still and she smiles as a mother smiles when her first born baby is laid on the bed beside her.
Out of her brave heart beats a tide that rises renewing the ruins of a nation,
Out of her youth revives the blood that flowed to make the soil of France forever priceless.

This is the only marriage that today's martyrdom has left her.
For her lovers and her brothers have marched and died from Dunkirk to the Dardanelles.
Her arms are empty but her soul is full and satisfied beyond words or seeing or feeling,
And she smiles in ecstasy as she smiled when she first shared in the broken body of God before the altar

Hers is the body and the soul of love in a sacrament that giving and sharing fulfills itself.
And she lives as her mother lived when life flowed freely from her breasts into the lips and the growing life of her daughter.

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She is more than herself, she is more than France, she is life and the handmaid of life that in dying is deathless.
And each line of her lips is a line of a new Magnificat sung in mercy, in silence transcendent.

August 26, 1915.

THE DECORATION

FLAT-CAPPED Chasseurs Alpins, blue devils of Hartmannsweiler's Kopf, surround the square.
The houses are old and gray and austere as the aging faces beneath them.
Some one has hung a Tricolor from the third floor of the tallest house.
It hangs motionless in mild sunlight like the ribbon honor pins on the breast of her bravest soldiers.

Drums roll: from the Avenue de la Gare, Joffre and two Generals advance.
He moves slowly. Men salute. Some stare as they still stare when God's high priest holds high His body.
In the center round an altar intangible and real the cripples are ranged,
They grip their crutches like swords of honor. A soul's life-time in each looks out of eyes of France expectant.

Joffre takes each token, each broken bit of God's body to day in France.
Slowly he passes along the line, and kisses each man on both cheeks as he passes.

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And all the love and fealty of France that she gave to her priests and their God once, goes from him and comes back to him.

And all the loyalty of France to flesh made strong by suffering shows in the face of a soldier's widow standing watching.

Her children are standing beside her wide eyed and wondering.

This is a day and an hour in the life of boy and girl that never can be forgotten;

God's decoration of the grayness of young lives already used to suffering, that long must suffer on.

For their brother lies last of all on an army cot, a slender lad of twenty with both legs shot away.

He sits bolt upright and salutes precisely as the great general pauses beside him,

And his breast swells and his heart beats fast as the gray face comes close to his own gray face.

France, you may pin sparse tokens with war-tried fingers to breasts that lift beneath eyes that look to you living and dying,

But the decoration you have set in these faces belongs to millions that march and that serve you still, living or dead.

February 15, 1916.

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THE PRISON CAMP

THE tree tops wave and the shadows slip through the close strands of the mile-long fence of barbed wire ten feet high.
The wind comes and goes with the spicy scents of the pine woods on three sides of the camp.
On the fourth side is a sandy plain where the sun is setting over England, France and Belgium.
Men's eyes follow it and turn back to the guard houses with their machine guns that grin at them.

Over the camp the clouds float and the birds fly, and their shadows fall on regular rows of toy-like barracks in the center.
Inside these the Prussian passion for soulless order has satiated itself.
They have regulated the food and drink of their captives to the last gram and cubic centimeter.
They have regulated the hours of their sleeping and rising, of their eating and drinking, of their sweeping and making their beds.
They have regulated their gait and their gestures when an officer or sub-officer approaches or passes.

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They have regulated the amount of their mail, the cubic feet of air they breathe at night, and the square feet of the earth's surface they may tread upon.

But they cannot regulate the thoughts they think, the dreams they dream and the strong hunger of their starving souls.

The men are thin, they walk slowly, they speak in low tones and unconsciously conserve their strength.

The regular rows of huts and the even strands of wire are like the bars of a grate where a fire burns low.

The life in them burns and burrows into itself and consumes itself with the everlasting patience of a living flame.

And the red grays, cinders fall, weakness dies, but the strength in them survives through endless months and days and nights of torment eternal.

August 2, 1915.

THE ARIA

The Pantheon's shadow creeps across the sacred hill, still closer to St. Etienne.

Little black shadows of the war in Paris cross the square to vespers in the older church.

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They enter one by one, and one by one they buy and light
their candles to St. Genevieve.
Inside her shrine they breathe the gray quiet of this urn
of stone that hides her spirit's ashes.

The church stands tall and tranquil from the floor where
Pascal sleeps, to the clerestory's benediction of stone
fingers framed in light.
It is a sermon shaped and spoken perfectly in stone; in
pavement, pillar, wall and capital and architrave
and groining.
It is a house where prayers come home to brood about its
columns, till flying forth, they bear God's messages
to multitudes that wait outside.
It is the heart of hope and pain for France, that
centuries before this war have made for France to
live in.

France rouses from her midday trance of silence and the
shadows here in Paris.
From western windows light comes flaming red and falls
like blood that drips down old gray walls.
And the dead dust of Pascal and Racine wakes and is
shaken by the organ's surf of sound,
By changing colors of the lights, choiring voices and
faces, and the smoke of incense woven in and wafted
out of it.

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The organ surges to a storm and through it, and subsides in rolling swells that barely rise and fall.

Then like a silver fountain in the sunlight gushing heavenward, suddenly an aria reveals itself.

And the pure sexless tones of the boy's heart are lifted past the rood loft with its crucifix above the choir.

And they soar and they hang in air, till people looking up and past all walls and vaulting see and hear their heroes:

Jean d'Arc, Ste. Genevieve, Du Guescelin, Roland, Bayard, Jean Bart, and Ste. Clothide;

All the old Pantheon of soldier souls of men and women who have fought and lived and died for France are here.

With them are lesser saints and sinners sublimated to this single voice of promise in the air,

Too true to live on earth; too transient to be touched, but by one single heart beat of the war worn heart of France that thrills and triumphs hearing it.

March 27, 1916.

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BESIDE THE MARNE

THERE are great blue gray circles where the Germans
burned their dead like brands on the flesh of France.
There are scattered graves, and graves in ranks, and long
trenches where the buried treasure of the ages lives.
And around them the peasants are already beginning to
plow and sow and forget.

There are bare wooden crosses and crosses covered with
rusty cuirassiers' helmets.
There are crosses covered with faded forage caps with
holes in them.
There are fresh cut crosses of granite with shining French
and Latin inscriptions.

Her soldiers lie thickest following the trenches and parallel
furrows that the plow of war has turned.
They lie in scattered windfalls where the great mother of
tomorrow still sows as she strides.
And all her sons and daughters of France still see her on
every letter that they live to write.

Here where she turned in her stride toward the Rhine at last,
Here where the flood from the East began to turn at full
tide,
Here where the storm of steel that pierced her breast drove
deepest, there lies a lonely grave by the highway.

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Tomorrow men may build monuments here, millions shall come through all time to wonder and breathe deep.

Today he lies where he fell, her last sentinel of freedom on the shaking soil of France.

And the peasant prays for him as he passes with his plow, breaking the body of France that the dead today share here with the living.

August 4, 1915.

ALSACE, 1915

Once more the land smiles in the sun of a cloudless and radiant September,

Once more school begins and the mothers come smiling, bringing their children hand in hand with them.

Once more Alsace that was dumb so long has found its voice and the voice of France that loves it.

This is the lost child of the nation that they are bringing back to the little white school house with the tricolor floating above it.

The floors are swept and Poincaré and Joffre look down from the walls to give the children welcome.

And around the walls of each room runs a frieze of flowers of white, of azure and crimson.

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There are two rooms and two teachers, one a nun and the other a one-armed soldier.
They stand in their uniforms of service that gives itself as freely as the light and the air and the soil of France are given to men.
And they smile and the woman opens wide her arms as she sees her children coming home to her.

Fifty pairs of little wooden sabots come and drum along the hard white road that leads to the new life love won back.
Fifty pairs of eyes look gravely at the frieze of flowers and the grave eyes of Joffre and Poincaré,
Fifty pairs of ears listen eagerly to the simplest syllables of a tongue that still is strange to them.

They see its letters shining white and precise in the copies prepared on the blackboards.
They hear the grace and the Latin candor of a language that is still man's countersign of freedom.
And something they feel lifting them, holding their hearts, like the swelling crescendo of a mighty symphony that softly has begun to sound.

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And the mothers slowly walk away, some smiling, some weeping for the past and their men still in the battle line;

Out of their birth in exile they have brought their flesh and blood to France and the birth of a new sacrament of sorrow and redemption.

And the beauty that lies on their lips and their brows is a beauty beyond the bride's and the mother's whose child turns back to her from dying.

Last to go are the gray grandmothers who have seen the third generation born to sorrow awake to light.

They have seen their sons and their daughters dying in doubt and dread, and the false and the feeble forgetting France and the voice of France.

And the light in their tired eyes is a living benediction, and the light in the eyes of the oldest mother of all who holds her own once more.

September 6, 1915.

THE PLANE AND THE SHADOW

It rises still in wider gyres a gyroscope of man's survival in the infinite.

In the spinning of the motors is the spinning of the thing that spirals ever through the ether and eternity.

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And the mind that found and framed it in the darkness under earth and sea is soaring here.
And the brute that builds in blackness and in blindness rises with it, clogging, clinging to the life that leaps beyond, and casts its shadow far below.

Its two motors clamor, singing the strong song of man that mounts and soars before the stars,
With a thin persistent ringing, rising far above the roar of guns that pour red floods of blood and fire from mountain summits back to sea again;
Flinging farther still its strident challenge till the storms with fire tipped talons and white flutterings of league-long wings drive down on it.
And the planes are white with snow, and the stays snatch feathers from the frost as the pale plane drives on beyond the snow squall.
And the lightnings strike and stab at it and it evades them as it swerves and mounts through shrapnel bursting white a mile below.

And its pulse of flame beats on alone in space at last.
It has passed the storms, and vibrates high in air as a strong singer dwells in C in alt. a breathing space.
Something in the pilot's frost paled face that pulses, swells beyond the minor and material cares and fears of earth;

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All the testing and repairing and refitting of the engine parts and rivets that have fixed and focussed life sublimed for centuries to hover here.

From the burly gray observer's stolid heart to his square hands there wells a worship momently transcending,

All the pin points on his scraps of maps where men with lusts of brutes and brains of demi-gods wrest life to death, contending for two blood and smoke stained rags.

And the plane still droning quivers high in sky, while thousands die by Verdun, as a singer of man's soul may hold a splendid C in alt.

As the singer's soul and breast must lapse to take in breath, the plane descending breathes to earth again.

And the pilot wipes his frost flaked glasses free from rime as sunlight melts the snow film on his planes.

And he tunes his motor truer, as the grim observer moves his rolling map, and shifts the focus of field glasses that he sights as once he sighted guns.

All the cunning of generations of master gunners that bred him, drives his eyes, like a pointer's eyes to snipe, to fix and map his guns; finding and counting them by flashes.

All the old skill and balance of brain of Breton helmsmen and Norman riders lives in the younger flight lieutenant who rides his currents of air and swerves from bursting shells like spray swept rocks.

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For the Purpose that raised and held them high in air to hark for one heart beat to the infinite that maps man's destiny, has steadier work for them.

And it sways them spiraling at lower levels, each a specific and specialized part of the growth whose spores are stars today fulfilled in them.

And out of the reek and horror of war made redder by instruments of murder more precise, a Vision of man in Space is forming,

And a Voice from the ether comes crashing to the swarming of ions and electrons trained to serve, as the wireless telephones its truth to nerves in ears below.

And now the map of a minute of time is made and the biplane turns to France as a homing hawk turns with food for its nest.

And the black eagles are up and out to cut it off and kill it, and Fokker, Taube and Albatross come towering towards it.

And Taube and Albatross fall; but the Fokker falcon rises towering, spiraling high and higher still.

And the biplane mounts to meet it, charting the spiral curve of life in space, and starting to fall as the petrol in the tank falls and blood drips from the driver's body.

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And the Fokker banking steeply dives from a precipice of air where eyes of hate look down on death, raining in an inverted vortex, a widening cone and hail of steel that sweeps its path.

And the biplane turns with the last essence in its tanks and the last ounce of dripping energy in the pilot's hands and heart, to meet machine gun with machine gun and death with death full tilt.

All the old fury and frenzy of Norman riders in tilt yards and tournaments and stricken fields won or lost past hope or fear, sustains him now:

All the old keenness of sight and fine coördinate functioning of Pictic archers, and gunners that Napoleon ennobled, live in his comrade as the machine gun band breaks off its beads of sound.

All the old faith of their fathers that battled through St. Bartholomew and outlasted La Rochelle, is life for France in this rosary of fire in the air.

And now the guns below have ceased, and on two sectors of trenches thousands on both sides are looking up in tensing silence that is prayer today.

For now is the moment supreme beyond all triumph or defeat where life lives on its throne of judgment, poising swaying scales of peril in the air.

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And the thousands staring up are seeing man that fights to light and freedom, grappling with another shade of night.

And the shadow of the Fokker falling on their upturned faces is the shadow of the brute that lurks at each man's shoulder, clogging flight forever;

Of the Brute that lusts and hates and builds, and drives man on to ride the winds to wrest night's shadow from her:

And ever goads him from his triumphs over time and space, to tenser struggling in abysses where his shadow plumbs himself.

March 6, 1916.

THE LAVOIR

Two years ago ten women washed a town's stained linen on these stones.

And they beat its grayness white in running water flashing bright, and flowing to the Loire and to the Ocean.

The March winds shook snow flurries out like suds, and whipped gray skies that dried to fluttering, white, curling clouds at last.

April wrung out the sap through the gray boughs of apple trees that blossomed white above the bleaching linen.

And the petals fell and floated down on girls' dark hair and laughing faces looking up, and on the lights and shadows gliding through the sliding water.

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And the apple petals were rosy as the wind-whipped faces of the girls; and some were tainted in their April beauty with a blight as old as earth.

Claire, the most competent, laundered indifferently, lace of her Countess by birth, and the latest Tours prostitute leasing the villa at Dol for the season.

And the borders of one bore a coronet, of the others a cypher such as one sees interlacing initials of kings on the Louvre.

Between the loud lavishness and intricate luxury of their webs of white waste there, Claire could find little to choose.

With her cold fingertips coolly she touched the lost lives of these women, the last of their lovers, and brought back one whiteness that blindly all women must worship.

And the touch of white lace like a kiss on warm flesh came closer to her as she worked toward the end of her task by the river.

And the river called and flowed by the road, and the wind in the trees beckoned, and the drying lace teased her as a trailing skirt may tease a kitten.

Little Angêle was washing the broad brassières trimmed with Bruges, of the bourgeoises who cringed to the countess and envied the other.

Little Angêle with her one shift a week dreamed dully how happy such wonderful women must be.

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Dreamed as a child will of red wine and strawberries and huge glossy plums of the Midi that went with their white table cloths.

Margot the hunchback beat savagely camisoles sheer as the seven pairs of high clocked silk stockings a week, worn by Lucile the tall midinette, flaunting her hat shop from Paris.

Older and coarser women who did the coarser work of the town, slaved at their task as they laved its stains away.

And their hands and their faces took a color from the grime ground into them.

Those too old for all but scandal and lies and covetousness, told stories that small Angêle had lost the grace to blush to.

And Margot's sneer wore towards a fixed mask of hate, and Claire grew ever wearier of the torment of her task and intolerable longing for a lover she could love, who never came.

Then War the great lover came like the bridegroom in the night to the wise virgins and the foolish ones and made full trial of them.

And Margot began to smile from watching other women weep, till tears untied at last the black knots of hate in her face and heart, in tenderness she never knew before.

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And little Angêle was aware that all her women's wasted linen was white to make bandages for France and the wounded soldiers of France,

And Claire who had always worked for herself and planned for herself, forgot her phantom lover, in her love for all the men of France that marched and died and were maimed and mangled for her.

The older women went away one by one to men's tasks in the town and the fields.

But the three girls still toiled by the river day by day, washing the bed clothes and the bandages black with blood and red with blood still bright on their whiteness.

For the countess had given her chateau for a hospital, and the prostitute had given her jewels and her motor and herself to the service.

And Claire and Margot and Angêle toiled and were stifled in the steam of its cellars through the winter.

And the spring came again, and again they beat their linen white by the river on stones that felt the falling petals from the swaying apple trees.

The stones and the river felt her tears that fell as Angêle knelt there in endless litanies of service for her dead who died for France and her.

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And time that stains and whitens all at last, washed the color from her face, purged dull pain from Margot's, and pride of youth that stands demanding all from Claire their fairer sister.

And the three girls washed their hands and their souls as they knelt, in the river that flashed to the sea taking all the stains and pains of war along with it.

Day by day they went their way heaping their baskets high with whiter petals of passion and prayer than ever fell there from their apple trees on them.

And they said little, but they sang and whispered softly to the murmur of the river, for time and pain had made them women as they knelt there.

Woman who stains the mind of man with little lies, who wraps herself in lace-like webs of lust and waste around his pilgrim passions;

Woman whose fingers wring all clinging taints from life; who makes herself a still cool bandage and white bed of rest for all the wounds and sufferings of souls;

Woman who kneels wherever rivers flow and fruit trees bloom and clouds come white, waiting in light till war brings back its heroes' hearts made white to worship her.

March 11, 1916.

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ROADS IN FRANCE

THEY were a network of veins and arteries in the life of France that lived and fought for this,
And a labyrinth of adventuring and a path of pilgrimages since the Crusades and before.
Out of them came the armed strength of France from mine to forge, to tiltyard, seaport and the passes of the Alps and Pyrenees.
Out of them, stone by stone, her cathedrals and castles arose.

Out of them seed by seed her farms and gardens flowered fairer and spread farther.
Out of thin meshes, drop by drop, was strained the blood that made her beautiful and brave.
Out of the shimmer of dew and the coolness of their shadows, her painters mixed a magic calling the world to wander here,
Where two tall rows of poplars marched processional to meet the Host in sunrise on the hills.

Then there were village girls with garments gay as their cheeks and lips that men kissed in shadowy corners,
Tourists in motors making each roadside inn a rest house of happiness halting at noon and at night,

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Teams of five horses in line hauling huge trucks of soft white stone for the sawing,
Abbés in black on women's bicycles worming through white flocks of sheep.

Now the abbés, shepherds, horses and motors have been mobilized.
The girls go in black; their faces are pale and children have cried when they kissed them.
The inns are empty and the roads are lonely, north, south and west and in the heart of France.
They are worn as bare as the threadbare seams in the garments of people that pass on them.

Eastward they are rutted and crowded with motor lorries and motor busses.
Long columns of troops march past ranks of crosses close by the side of the road.
Past shell torn stumps of trees that stand like monuments of a million amputations,
Till they come to the zone of fire where the shells are falling still.

Here the land is sick, pitted and infected with steel and burned with the cautery of a red and ruthless reconquest.
And the roads of France are ceaselessly bringing fresh blood that is dripping still wherever their ends are severed,

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And, foot by foot and mile by mile, the land is slowly
healing from its hurts,
As furrow by furrow, the peasants bring their plows past
the shell holes of two summers ago.

Thousands of well worn trails to truth that no shell fire
can obliterate,
They are waiting for the day when the whole frontier shall
be full of the glad calling of bugles and the rapid
rolling of drums,
And every road from the East shall be an avenue of
triumph to the troops returning
Out of the darkness of hate to the sunshine that smiles
over France.

July 20, 1916.

DEPORTATION

BERTHE is nineteen and a half:
A slim dark slip of a girl such as children love and men
marry and women smile on, anywhere from Toronto
to Tangiers,
And she clings to the little window of the third class car
that rattles and bumps towards the old Belgian
frontier, and looks back toward France with tears
in her eyes.
For she is going into slavery in exile and into worse than
slavery.

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Seventeen years she lived in a village near Lille that still resembles Domremy with a house here and there shattered by shells.

And the war came, and whirled her and her mother round and round in its eddies and left them stranded in a room above a café in the rue Ferou in Lille at last.

And Berthe served still and elderly French civilians, and Saxon and Bavarian boys who hammered on the marble topped tables with their steins;

And who looked at her like sly and hungry dogs who still feel the sting of their master's whip as they walk the streets behind him.

Berthe went among them like a kitten with her hair crinkling and ready to spit and leap to a table top.

And she grew older and warier and more intense in her hatred for all things German that generally she sufficiently concealed.

And she went to mass and confession less and less, and found that she could no longer pray as her mother still managed to pray.

And she found it harder and harder not to do as other girls in cafés and houses and hotels were doing, and to sell what she had left to sell to the soldiers who stole when they could.

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And the German batteries and mill wheels wore away the Belgian miners and millwrights they had enslaved like their own men and women.

And German prostitutes were impressed and mobilized more and more into farm work and factories for clothes and munitions.

And German psychology faltered and sagged as the second winter wore away and German victories were far to seek,

And prisoners marched through the streets of Berlin, and prison trains placarded and shunted from station to station grew fewer and fewer.

Then came the days of the wholesale deportations from Lille and the rest of the cities in France that they occupied.

And they took the boys of sixteen and seventeen for slaves and girls and other women for their pleasure and their profit.

And there were prayers and tears and agonized partings, blows and shots and frenzied sellings of the bodies of mothers for their daughters, and daughters for their mothers and brothers.

And they herded them into station yards and horse cars like cattle, and the trains came day by day and night by night, to take them away.

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Berthe is nineteen and a half and she feels nineteen centuries old and older still tonight.
And she looks at a girl younger than herself who has sobbed herself to sleep and who starts and winces at a sudden jar of the train,
Slipping her hand into the hot hand that clutches and clings to it, and looking out through the third class window into the twilight and the land of France,
With the profile and the prophetic insight in her lifted eyes,
Of the shepherd lass who looked towards Orleans, Rheims and Rouen with its market place of madness, while she dreamed near Domremy.

November 11, 1916.

SPRING IN PICARDY

Off to the east, like thunder that may roll nearer,
The great guns grumble, shaking black crumbling walls.
Spider webs fresh spun of sunshine, are swaying gently in a jagged gap
Where a blind soldier sits, brushing away the shadowy spiders of pain he feels on his forehead and cheeks from time to time.

A woman waits beside him with her hand in his,
Feeling him clutch and cling to it, and quiver as the walls stir at each jar in the air;

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Seeing shifting pictures of pale horror and red torment reeking and reeling still in the blackness he stares at;
Breathing gently, with the invincible patience of a mother who has borne her baby in pain and still lives to give her body and her blood to him.

The sun creeps slowly round the great dial of life whose half is hidden from men;
And the guns go on ticking off the seconds and hours of a new eternity of pain that persists and seems to rend the world.
And the woman weeps softly and silently, watching her brother who is a cripple trying with one hand to clear the broken bits of stone away.
From the grass plot that spreads around her ruined house and the mangled flower beds that still mark out its borders.

Facing her is a huge shell hole and a crater, where her eyes are caught and lost in blackness again and again.
And from time to time as the guns shake the earth, clods crumble and rills of sand and grains of gravel fall into it.
And she stares farther away into emptiness till her eyes creep inch by inch to two tiny violets,

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That have blossomed over night at the very verge of the void; and she softly looses her husband's hold on her.
And staggering like a little child she comes, and she falls and buries her face and her soul in the France that breathes from their fragrance.

November 12, 1916.

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ENGLAND

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THE ENGLISH FLEET

MILLIONS of men backed by earth and her mines hold her
trenches against the great brute.
Here in these islets of eagles, a bay in the Orkneys has
focussed the truth and trained brains of the race.
Milton lives here; Cromwell is cousin to Drake, Shake-
speare, Pitt, Raleigh, Pym, Sydney, Howe, Hampden
and Gordon and Nelson.
Darwin and Maxim, Watts, Stephenson, Faraday, Lister
and Wallace keep guard on these decks.
All old audacities driving the Spaniard to death on dim
sands and far skerries,
Gleam in the eyes of these boys, of these men that must
sentinel time for a moment.
All the old discipline Rome taught their tribes holds them
firm.

Earth to this end of today trained her tribes and her
legions;
Gathered up riches and raped them from Carthage and
Egypt, from Babylon, Rome and Golconda.
Ventured her Vikings at sea from the bergs of the north
to blue atolls that relay man's trail round the world;
Flinging forth seamen and ships like their cities, for dice
in her game with destruction.

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Every still tide and each storm in the seas, since the hour
that time dawned, wrought to fashion the stuff in
these ships.
All the blind life of the ooze that advanced from the slime
to the sands, to the mountain tops, marched to the
mind of their masters.

Lean, gray and grim, these last watch dogs of life lie ready
and strain their linked leashes.
Flickering colors astern, spell a vigilance vital as vultures'
o'er ocean and air.
Midships comes cracking subdued from the wireless, that
leaping its sea leagues
Relays the sea's countersign to its masters from outposts
of fog and of storm in the night.

Silent they lie in the sunlight. Destroyers and cruisers,
Rippled like waves with the shadow and swing of the sea,
circle round them,
Colliers lie close to the sides of the swiftest whose turbines
turn tireless unceasing;
Hydroplanes home to their hive of new thought and new
life in the Island to leeward;
Servants alike to the mind that is making that Service of
England
Strength to the wealth of the world of today, and a pledge
of God's purpose tomorrow.

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Silent they sway down their lines, these scant scores of
smoke-gray, inscrutable capital ships;
Oracles dumb of destruction whose silence is stronger
than bursting of bombs and the surf roar of
battle;
Capital letters of law that is written in steel for all earth
on their desolate bay in the north;
Spelling the sentence of aggrandized greed and its lying
and lusting and maiming and murder;
Capital letters of truth that no facile and phrase making
fool can gainsay;
Spelling the will of the world that from ruins and reek of
all wars marches on,
On toward the stars, from sea slime to the hills and steel
sea crests whose service is England's.

February 12, 1916.

THE REEF

THERE is a reef on the coast near Queenstown.
There the rocks run down from feathery foliage like talons
stretched to rake the sea for food.
On the sand in a pocket of the rocks lies stranded a life
belt from the Lusitania.
Bound to it are two children drowned in the night by the
tide lop.

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The dawn gleams on their cold blue eyes open to daybreak and sea gulls.
The little waves play with them and touch them with fingers of children tender and passionate.
A vine that trails from a rock, waves and beckons them on to places that children love to play in.
Shadows of wings above them flit across the sand and fall on their faces.

They lie like all things human that disintegrate slowly in shadow and sunlight.
And the tides turn and the clouds pass oblivious of them.
But even as they lie there these two dead children are stronger
Than any thousand living men in all the Kaiser's armies.

June 25, 1915.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

GREAT men and small have sat upon these empty benches.
Small men, tall hatted, trim, well groomed, have dozed their own and England's time away.
Shades of the past, Wellington, Beaconsfield, Devonshire, Salisbury, Aberdeen, Palmerston, Mansfield and Roberts have lingered and looked on and listened.

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Vice-regents and pro-consuls, Cromer, Curzon, Minto, Melbourne, here made history.
Bishops, lords spiritual, archangels of old lies and greed and truth eternal, nodded here and one by one departed.

A spider works in secret here: dust lies in corners as dust lies and molders in the Abbey hard at hand.
And there is twilight formed by London fogs all winter, and through the nights no lights betray its presence to stray Zeppelins.
Here any peer of England used to meet his peers and cronies, joking, smoking, damning income taxes, praising good old days in ducal club rooms once.
Here there is silence of small voices till a riot rages after Northcliffe tells and sells his tainted truth,
And Kitchener comes, tall, soldierly, succinct; reports, departs and leaves another crater of small critics and intenser loyalty.
Here stronger, sterner, disciplined and tried traditions of a past patrician still sufficiently express themselves.

When Kitchener speaks to England all the hall is full,
And all the square and streets outside are lined with soldiers and with cheering boys and peering women.
Kitchener, the Irishman grown older, wiser and more loyal far to Empire and England than the wildest youth of Ireland;

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No longer the old idol now, efficient and sufficient in each
infinite detail of war that rocks the world:
Kitchener, the man and master, feared and trusted still
by aliens in the East and South;
Born of the North and West that still can rise to dominate
earth's destinies;
Kitchener, the older soul of London and of empire, waking
late and blundering far through fog and smoke of
England's battle, on to light at last.

The people want a Man to make their newly-wakened
godhead evident.
And England stands for loyalty and love to old, tried,
tottering leaders and dead forms of things today.
Her powerhouse new of Empire, throbs; here women,
boys and brooding hearts of hate and grasping hands
of labor make munitions.
No one can say today how far her younger lords in uniform,
and infant heirs of peers' pale widows, may serve
England's need tomorrow:
How far her soldiers risen from the ranks and crude
protagonists of peace may sway and face her future.

But here today in twilight and in gloom her oldest heirs
of soldiers and of statesmen loaf and sleep no more.
They have gone forth to lead her armies and to serve and
die; and living, dying, hold the seas for freedom.

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New ghosts with stigmata of race, and war's red scars and ghastly decorations come and take their seats by right,
They throng long corridors and crowd high galleries where older shades in solemn conclave sit;
Under the shadow of this tallest river tower that like a lighthouse of tradition stands
To lift this light of England's oldest service to her sons and heirs, towards truth through night and storm imperially.

February 23, 1916.

MUNITIONS

A BOY from Eton stands keen eyed in a workshop at Woolwich.
Before him a lathe is turning, smoothly spinning, with the regular urge and momentum, and the round orbit of planets,
And his hands and his heart grow hard as they hold the turning tool to the point of the shell he is shaping.

Under the strength of them slivers of steel peel away and fall to the floor of the workshop.
He is forgetting Latin and Greek and the syntax of strange conjugations.
He is forgetting cricket and shedding the crust that cramped and congealed him.

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All that is in him now goes to the shaping of shells and the truth of their pointing.
And his face glows with the joy of a young god in the throes of creation.
He is a link in a chain of steel and will that binds the world to new and more valiant adventures.
He is a wave in a tide that spreads through leagues of land and sea and air, and far eddies of ether.

Vital with intolerable vibrance, in the torments of pain and the shattering bursting of shells, it advances,
Shaking and rending gray remnants of years and old tyrannies torturing Europe.
And the boy with hard hands holding steel that is sharpening steel, is its servant.

Swiftly he turns out his shells and he whistles and sings at his working.
Whether this misses, that fails to explode, or another bursts fair on his target, he knows not and cares not
More than a culture that breeds in its test tube bacteria benign or destroying.

He is a part of a culture of life that breeds its steel cells of a planet's renewal like microbes that breed in men's bodies.
And the steel that lay dormant for years is alive in his hands as the drops of men's blood it must spill are alive.

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As he stands and the lathe turns releasing the slivers of steel that fall to the floor from his hands,
He is man's will that has pointed all steel and the purpose of life in these shells that dissect man's emergence.

August 11, 1915.

POISONED GAS

New terror creeps through night and a new breath of death has come to kill the sleepers.
Men wear new masks of horror today to hide the faces war defames or signally ennobles.
New tremblings are betrayed by sleep in dim lit dugouts; there are new mutterings of weakness where the trenches hold men's backs against the wall.
And a new hospital behind Bethune that German 'guns have shelled today, tonight is another new inferno of unimagined agony.

Four dim stars in the dark behind blind windows focus forty eyes of torment.
Forty ears of pain hear unheeding gasping and groaning of others, and whispering of white faced surgeons and nurses.

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Forty lips of animals, blackened and bleeding, utter the only lonely voice of revolting and defiance that frightfulness has left to them.

Forty distorted arms and hands are blackened and swollen by gases like the putrifying fragments of life death strews today from sea to sea.

Twenty broken burning bodies of war, blackened and bared to the waist are shuddering pulses of a torment man has never known before.

They writhe propped high on grimy pillows, as blackened brands are propped on a failing fire of life that lingers on.

Gasping, they are smelling greedily at black balloons of oxygen that nurses hand them and replenish constantly.

They are new born babes of pain, and the love that dares all and devises all that mangled life in man may live again.

And out of the torments of this new birth of horror some shall rise and go forth again in the likeness of man that is the image of God on earth.

February 17, 1916.

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THE SEA HAWK

Eyes in the seaplane scan the sea for peril, as the sea hawk watches the waves for food;
Eyes of the mind in the air that fitted and fined their lenses to find a periscope slitting the sea as a shark's fin cuts through blue water.
The sky above is cloudless and blue and the sea to southward is still and shadowless.
To the north a fleck of foam born in the beauty of light falls white as a snowflake in air down the blue surface of the sea.
And the seaplane sweeps and circles towards it till its shadow hovers over the huger shadow of horror half hidden by the sea.

The men in the submarine are hungry, thirsty, half choked by bad air, half dead for lost sleep and close to the last limit of sanity and self control.
They are short of food and drink, short of light oil and heavy oil for engines, battery supplies and ammunition and extra parts.
They are short of tenderness, love, pity, common humanity which the German admiralty has carefully shut out of their lives with doors that neither water nor air can penetrate.

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They are shorthanded, down hearted, black browed, sombre souled, bitter with an intense and murderous bitterness in their cage of darkness under the sea.

And the metallic ticking and clicking of the clockwork, and the grinding of the engines is translated into tones of their voices, every motion they make, every twist of their lips, every lift of their eyes.

And the engines snarl on through shoal water, and the captain scans a sea empty of all but one will to kill in his own maddened mind.

He has run afoul of steel nets near Liverpool, and shot his divers out to cut their air lines, as they cut the last strands of steel wire.

He has blown the nose off an African liner and seen her tilting and dropping people from her as a dog drives fleas from him as he dives.

He has shelled an English hospital ship at long range and sunk a trawler in her lee and cursed them both.

He has seen destroyers and motor patrol boats scuttling like water beetles where he submerged, and laughed at them.

And then the storms have taken him and his men and made life intolerable and interminable hell for them.

They have churned them up and down in shallow water like maggots in a dead cat a boy swings by the tail till he hurls it away.

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They have run from a cruiser over a series of shoals where the bottom plates pounded and their pumps clogged, and lain half a day aground in the open, unseen and unhoping till night.

They have struggled as Titans struggle to lighten ship, and thrown their spare stores and spare parts away willingly.

And they have gone at last on the last of the tide, leaving a spare torpedo and the lives of scores of English men and women and children, for children to find dismantled on English sands.

The captain and the men brood on this last loss as they drive back sullenly to Germany.

And the tireless ticking and grinding of the engines grinds at their nerves and frays them finer and finer.

And the captain stands in his steel turret of terror with its mirrors of a magic blacker than any wizard or Magian ever worked with or made before.

And his senses are subdued to tenser torments of hate and hunger, and the shadows that flit from side to side escape him.

And the seaplane that has towered high as she swung, hovers low and then swoops like a hawk to its mark.

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And at last the shadow of death in the air hangs for a heart-beat directly over the shadow of death that lurks in the sea.

And the bomb falls as ripe fruit falls in the time and the place life made for it

And a sudden geyser of shining sea water and the life that is beauty leaps into the air,

And the hate of the Germans is gone with their ghosts in a giant roar in the mighty wind of their passing.

But something of their essence still persists and leaks from below in a reek of oil that eddies and drifts on the sea.

February 7, 1916.

THE POET

Christ Church tower lifts gray against a sky of April that has broken blue.

Out of an ivy framed window at Oxford that the air-vandals have overlooked, a lad is looking.

He is the youngest son of the oldest don in his college.

His are the clear features and more subtle stigmata of breeding like Byron's and Rupert Brooke's.

He is home with a broken leg from a football match at the training camp.

Around him are ranks of books where the culture of the classics and of England and France is assured to the world.

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And the lines on the table before him still spell the same gracious tradition,
Lines like the lines of his face that frowns, still inconclusive and youthfully unfinished.

The boy's flesh is soft and clean with a surface culture of centuries like the level turf in the quadrangle below.
And the will that works in him is persistent as the clinging ivy that frames his face.
And underneath all there is something as hard and assured as the smooth façade of the college and the mind that made and perpetrated its pediments.
He is a part of the plan of England's empire of free peoples that nineteen hundred years of history have yet to finish.

For Oxford that is in his blood and in his voice, is a city of flowering stone like Florence;
Mother of scholars and lesser men and empire makers like Cecil Rhodes;
Mother of dreamers and doers in all the earth that the will of men, which is the Word of God, may find itself;
Heir of the truest and most perfect traditions of time's beauty, that is never perfect, that must break or be broken and pass and be ended today.

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And the boy with his broken leg and his boy's face feels this as he looks and learns the truth that Oxford teaches.

He knows that no cloistered virtue or beauty or truth is sufficient for the world whenever God calls the nations to war's last assize.

He knows that Oxford and all England are on trial before the world today, as this war is trying and testing him.

He knows that every son of light in his city and in his earth, must witness to the truth as God gives him to see it.

And he sits silent still, as the shadows fall and spread from the western wall that hides the sunset.

And the shadows of his hand and of his pen grow broader across the lineless paper that lies before him.

He is the youth of his class and his caste and of Oxford and England that waits still to testify;

Whether it writes in fire and steel, in the flesh of alien men and its own where the trenches are time's last lines of truth;

Whether it builds for its own and all earth a house of life and a lantern of light for centuries like Oxford;

Whether it sets forth imperishably on pieces of paper, the soul of England that thrills today through its hour of trial and travail and triumph.

February 22, 1916.

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THE ASSAULT

A PINNACLE of ruin sagging east points like a maimed finger
from its hill top towards Bapaume.
An English lieutenant of artillery is the tip of the tentacle
of wire and steel behind it.
He smokes his last cigarette, gripping a telephone receiver
that he holds unconsciously and tenaciously,
While the trenches before him crumble away steadily as
the line of ash creeps down the tube of paper toward
his lips.

He has seen the English aeroplanes shoot down the Fok-
kers and Taubes and drive them down.
He has seen the sausage shaped observation balloons
sliced through with bombs and obliterated.
He has seen a battle-plane shelling a battalion caught in
the open and scattering them.
He has seen an army's eyes in the air blinded, remembering
the bloody days near Mons two years before.

He has heard the guns thunder on for six days and nights
and another day,
Catching snatches of sleep as men staggering down from
the bridge, can learn to sleep through a storm that
wrecks a week of winter on the Atlantic.

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He has seen the earth leap up in waves and fall back again
under spatters of rain that seem but the spray of a
second.
He has seen each dawn surge up from under the shadow of
earth like a wilder wave of ruin reddening eastward.

He has seen the wind shift the smoke down the barrage of
fire and steel he has built along the arc of his sector.
And the mighty orchestration of five hundred guns great
and small, broadly ranged and exquisitely controlled,
has obsessed him like a dream.
He feels that he is a mere spectator behind the scenes of a
drama of death going on before him,
As alien in spirit to the brain that conducts that orchestra,
as to the actors on the stage where footlights are the
flaming mouths of guns.

He understands indifferently that intolerable intensities
of hunger and thirst, of sleepless panic and agony
and mangled hate are fit for it.
He is too tired to feel it or to forecast the results of the
morning's assault.
He sees a sunset's opal islands of air as indifferently as the
food with his relief that he has waited five hours for.
And he flings himself down in the warm July night and
smiles at a breeze from the west and a breath of his
England that brushes his brows as he sleeps.

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He wakes in a sudden hush of the guns convulsive and choked before the dawn.

He sees a blaze of glory in the sky waiting to welcome the English to death or victory.

He sees a horizon of hideousness becoming clearer with every turn of his glasses through every rod of its torn and tormented profile.

He sees the shadows stealing west and thousands of shadowy shapes from his own lines advancing to meet them.

He hears the first machine guns come to life, and then the barrage of shells has built itself again.

He sees a river of lava spreading below him, flaming at its edges and flanks, sucking into second line dugouts in vortices of death.

He sees men falling fast where machine guns strike like rattlesnakes of steel coming swarming from their holes.

He sees men hurling bombs at them as boys cast stones at snakes, and crushing them.

He sees the high tide of the advance rising in waves from ridge to higher ridge,

Curling over and around ruined villages where each house is a shattered mask to a huge and grisly mouth of hate in the ground.

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Swallowing English lives by scores till their engineers bring dynamite and make an end of it.
He sees a forest set on fire by shells flaming into a crimson parterre of triumph to the south of him.

And now a red rocket of victory flowers from a village hidden in smoke and twilight, and now another.
Some of the wounded stagger back, and men bring in the dying like red and paling petals for a rose jar of memories eternal:
And the boy's thoughts go back to England, to Westminster, to the Abbey; till a bell rings and he becomes a part of his telephone again.
For another six square miles have been blasted out of an empire of blindness and hate today.
And again the gunners are at work, getting the ranges, lengthening the fuses swiftly for their last grim blasting to triumph.

July 19, 1916.

THE MACHINE

A British commissariat clerk looked out of a shattered window at Amentieres,
Weary of the endless monotony of counting and checking and issuing rations,
Thousands of boxes of Peek and Frean's assorted biscuits for officers' tea,

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Millions of bars of Fry's and Cadbury's and Nestle's milk and hazlenut chocolate,
Myriads of glasses of Cross and Blackwell's red raspberry jam, and Andrew Kieler's Dundee orange marmalade in its little white porcelain jars,
Turned to suppurating wounds and blood that caked as it oozed in the sepsis of trench fever and intermittent typhoid.

He grew utterly weary of the immense agony and futility of the seamy side of the war as it was shown to him,
Sick of the unending procession of hospital trains and ships from England to the front,
And the interminable scavenging in motor cars of broken bodies from third line trenches and huge shell holes in little French towns ten miles behind the lines,
Sick of the insufferable organization and standardization of suffering,
In huge base hospitals and clearing houses of horror like the one behind him where the longest trains went,
Where deadly wounds were as much a matter of routine as his own red jars of raspberry jam were,
And amputations were as simple and essential as the tearing of a printed form out of his own red backed order book.

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He grew utterly weary of the thought of the ammunition trains rolling back and forth as regularly as a machine gun shifts its spray of death;
And the munition factories working day and night in double and triple shifts;
And the soft hands of women grown hard like their lips and their hearts from handling lead bullets and copper shell cases.
And he gazed out of his glassless window at a gray street and the roofless rafters of a house ten yards away.
And he wondered what was the use and the reason and the sufficient cause for anyone in the world going on living and seeing and hearing it all an hour or a second longer.

He got up from his seat on an empty packing case and leaned away out of the window again,
And he saw a string of British troopers riding their tall gray horses back from the river where they went to water them.
And every one of the ten men had a French child laughing and crying aloud astride of the gray back in front of him.
And his thoughts went back suddenly twenty years to the time when he first rode his father's horse to the blacksmith's to be shod in Rottingdean.
And his thoughts went forward suddenly twenty years and more to a time to come,

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That all the agony and the monotony and the huge and wholesale blundering of the war was working and waiting for.

And he went back to his store room again as the last tall trooper turned the corner.

And he went on handling his boxes and his bales and his invoices and his checking lists,

As Joffre and Cordona are handling batteries and battalions and *corps d'armée* and conquering armies.

September 26, 1916.

A SENTRY

He has fallen asleep on the march for the last five days and nights since Mons was abandoned.

He has eaten emergency rations and raw turnips, and drunk his sterilized water by thimblefuls.

He has dug the trenches that gridiron his retreat like a man of a football team setting his heels at the last five yard line.

He has seen his comrades falling and shattered, and felt the slash of steel in his own flesh.

He lies in his shell hole and looks towards the East where the night and the earth lie like lovers.

Whispering passion profound and slow peace beyond human imagining.

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Overhead in the haze stars drift through space like the dust of God's dreams of creation,
Carving His planets with fire into nerves and the intricate knowledge of men.

He thinks of his chemistry test tubes at home and his star showers of flaming magnesium,
As the German flares suddenly rise and the shells star the trenches a half mile behind him.
Out of the night a dull gray wave suddenly surges against him,
Washing one more atom of mind and of will into the flame and the fumes of this acid solution of war.

June 8, 1915.

THE STRETCHER BEARER

He has put two morphia tablets under the tongue
Of two hundred pounds of red haired torment from Aberdeen with half of his hip shot away.
He has watched a freckled face grinning white in its frenzy of sweat and grime, sag and soften like a tired child's at last;
And a huge hand that convulsively clinched and clung to life, insensibly relaxed.

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He has handed the Highlander over to two other staggering stretcher bearers.
He has gone out in front in a gap and a ten-foot shell-crater swept by German machine guns intermittently.
And there he has met another huge hulk of a man crawling through a night of shell fire and star shells red and green and blinding white,
Shambling like a bear and growling like a bear at the bite of a bullet lightly lodged in his back.

He has dressed the wound, searing it with iodine, and getting a back handed swipe in the face from the man's scarred hand for his pains.
He has led the way through the night down a traverse and a supply trench toward the first field dressing station for yesterday's advance,
With the wounded man shambling like a bear and swearing and breathing his own last half inch of rum, hot on his heels;
With shells chiming in salvos in beats of four, and churning parapet, parados, dugout and sapheads together, before them and behind them.

He has come into a field that is a short cut through death for a dozen different fighting units,
Pitted with shell pits and splotched with bleeding and rotting bodies of men and horses and mules,

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With a path and a sputtering trough of mud where dying men drown, worn deep by the feet of the dead who went before them.

And they have wound past shell pits, mired to the shoulders and hips, and rested panting on heaps of bodies that stirred obscurely below them in the perpetual pelting of rain that froze to sleet as it fell.

They have oozed with the rest into a road and a river of mud where the food and the munitions convoys get through three times in five,

Into an artery of murder *strafed* persistently all night by shell fire, machine guns and snipers with rifles sighted and clamped to fixed rests the morning before;

Where each pulsing of the blood means the stilling of the blood in some man's heart, or the maiming of some man or beast in mortal and intolerable agony;

Where the pelting of steel is as impartial and persistent as the pelt of the sleet, and as pitiless.

And they have suddenly come out of the storm round the shoulder of a hill, where the crying of the wounded like the yapping of the puppies of a whipped pack, is faint and far away;

Where masked lights lead the way to a place where it begins again spasmodically and indescribably under the knives and fingers of the surgeons.

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And he has seen his wounded man's face suddenly lit with
the light of a man who creeps beyond the brute to
rest and the end of his torment at last,
And he turns to go back with this hope in his heart
to the penance of pain his God has imposed in
Himself;
And on souls that He strips; that He hammers and rends;
and finds fit in His trenches to face Him today.

November 6, 1916.

TANKS

MAN that makes new chaos out of fire and rending steel,
and masters and emerges from it,
Seeking strength to end his wrestling blind where the
trenches heave like dykes and pressure-ridges of his
hate volcanic,
Finds new forms of life that live and freely move across
this powder pitted wilderness of torment.

All the earth awoke and smiled and laughed aloud that
summer morning, echoing the shouting
When the tanks came waddling past the British lines and
walking past the hail of steel and wallowing past
shell pits,
Like primeval vast sea saurians crawling, creeping still
inexorably onwards.

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All the brains and will of England's empire and her sailors of far continents and islands, stayed to steer them.

All the might of new munition cities turning out steel shells and engines, chains and wheels and rails was writhing rolling through them.

All the strength of all the motherhood of England lived to bear these iron babes of war and lift them past each crater torn by travail.

So they traced the curves of life that rising, falling, swaying, surging, moves by wave lengths;

Straddling trenches, enfilading bastions, till the Boches quit, and holding up a hundred quivering hands cried "Kamerad;"

Treading dugouts down, and thrusting under hell's machine gun hatches, shouldering away the walls of villages as saurians vast picked out their meat from huts they cracked like nuts.

Dukes' and ditchers' sons of England followed breathlessly and shouting, digging in, and sweeping up their flotsam as they lumbered on towards Lens.

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Men by millions following their trail in print, saw vaster vistas opening, rising from raw ruts in time where life from shapes of slime to larger life emerges.

Men begotten of brine and sea-ooze that undulates and swirls, on earth and women, laboring up to motor coiling round all roads and rivers, spiraling through air, beheld and loved their slow and stolid lumbering solidity.

So they came, the iron land ships, from their island past the channel, past the trenches, toward Berlin.

Manned by men whose fathers souls of Vikings steering sea snakes, wild war dragons, out past Avalon, past Iceland, fared still farther forth to sea;

Men who mastering all storms of centuries by land and sea, still steering past this storm of fire and steel, sail on to destinies unknown indomitably.

January 16, 1917.

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RUSSIA

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THE DAWN

BEFORE the sun the light begins to grow and smile on
Mother Russia.
It sifts through shifting meshes of shadow and drifting
mists that cease as shadows cease.
The birds begin to stir and sing like little living echoes of
sunrise,
Their notes fall clear as dewdrops on a field that war has
trampled.

One of our men was looking through a steel loophole in a
trench fifty yards from the enemy's salient.
And he saw a man's face raised above the parapet turned
to the sunrise as a nun regards an ikon.
And he centered his sights on the lips that closed and that
parted in silent adoration.
Then suddenly shifted his aim to the bronze number at
the corner of the uniform collar and fired.

We were without the shells that are war's hypodermic
needles of hate.
And we lay in our lines cursing like morphine fiends when
their daily dose of drug is denied them,

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While in the south the Prussians and Austrians fused and blasted their way of blood toward Lemberg.
Then one day carloads of ammunition came through from a factory in Osaka,
And our guns shook the day, and scarred the night with a bombarbment of meteors that burst when they struck.

Dawn shuddered into clearer horror as we ran hurling hand grenades.
Down two kilometers of trenches we drove them to the marsh's edge.
At last, as croupiers at Monte Carlo rake up their stakes, our men raked up the dead.
Some were distorted and shattered. We came on one boy by himself,
Smiling and perfect, as the head of Hermes in the Winter Palace at Petrograd,
Lying with blind eyes looking to the East. And one of our sharpshooters nodded and said,
"This is the one that I shot as he looked at the sunrise yesterday.
He is beautiful as a statue and glad as a girl in the arms of her lover.
And the soil of Russia will be richer for him forever and ever."

July 11, 1915.

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THE ARK

Two old men bearing a stretcher splash through the gutters of a ghetto in Kovno,
And the raindrops print their patterns on the oily swirl that eddies through the gutters as they go.
There is a faint red line that renews itself from time to time as the leader's cheek leans to his greasy shoulder;
And there are slow red drops falling from sodden canvas, painting faint crimson lines where the rabbi's feet make patterns.

These men are old with the age of a race haunted by sorrow when Berlin was a kitchen midden, and the Hohenzollerns the naked slaves of slaves.
They have known robbery, captivity, slavery, murder and outrage in Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt and all the ghettos of Europe.
They have wandered in the wilderness and paid blood sacrifice to gods of wood and stone stained brown with blood.

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They have sold their sons and daughters to Baal and Astaroth, Astarte and Moloch, and taken their share of the world's wealth for them.

And ever they have circumcised their sons, sanctified their food, lit their altar lights and honored for ages the lightest letter of their law.

They have betrayed and traded and crucified their Messiah and raised him from the dead, that a remnant of men might see the God in man that dies not.

They have sold and delivered their sons and daughters to devils and gods of gold and silver, copper and brass and steel and dynamite today.

They have haggled with the craftiest and the richest of the money changers that Christ today casts out of the temple of God defamed in man.

They have seen their children slain by Herod and his soldiers, and old Herods dying slowly, and always new murderers born in the image of God again.

And always a remnant of them have kept the vision of Messiah and a man child born of woman to save the world, safe in the hearts of men.

For this they have toiled and traded and hoarded and cheated and lied and died, and lived to die again.

For this they have prospered and plotted like Moses, and laid plagues on their foes from generation to generation of Pharoahs and Herods who hate God.

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For this they have marched like Moses through the desert, mounted to talk with God in the mountains, and cast down and broken and blasphemed the tables of the law.

For this like all men to whom God is a Holy Ghost, they have seen their Holy Land afar, and have not entered in.

Two Hebrew brethren, old and broken, bearing the names of their leaders of old, go tramping through the gutters of a Kovno ghetto.

They tramp through Russia with its illimitable freedom of tundra and steppes, and its starving millions that have crawled and crushed them into the persecutions and perjuries of the Pale.

They tramp through water that swirls away to ripple through sandy reaches of sunlight where the blood and filth of man that it washes away in part depart from it.

They bear with them the body of a man child fresh circumcised to meet Messiah, that a shell splinter has made a broken promise of faith in flesh and blood.

They bear unknowing the Ark of a new covenant that God makes with His chosen in blood and tears today.

And the angels of a wind of infinite mercy and compassion waft through mist that clears, to wipe all tortured faces.

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And the sunlight that is the smile of a God that suffers in the flesh with men, glitters on their tears that fall as His last raindrops fall;

Till the spirit of God has fulfilled itself today in sacrifices by fire and blood He shares with His chosen people of promise and infinite pain.

February 28, 1916.

PINSK

The August sun climbs slowly and his light streams down on illimitable marshes in Russia.

And the strength of his rays is blunted and blinded, lost and lavished vainly on a world of stagnant matter.

And no eye and no lens on earth can analyze or synthesize the secrets that lie hidden in its depths.

There is no cloud in the sky that grows gray, and no ripple in the water and no sound and no stir in the air.

Suddenly bullets begin to fly like dragonflies of steel, flitting and hurtling between the grasses.

And the sound of their escape from the cells of brass that held them telegraphs a will that finds its word at last.

In the pauses of their firing comes the fervid pulsing of racing motor boats that move among the marshes.

And the stillness wakes, and raggedly it breaks from north to south into the harsh, heart-shaking surf and symphony of battle.

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There is a railroad through the marshes that the Russians have dynamited and destroyed.

And the German engineers come swarming as ants swarm around small carrion to drag their siege guns over it.

They have relaid a length of track and run a loaded train on it to test it.

Ahead, half a kilometer, there is a huge hummock, in the midst of the marshes

And the train strains, the wheels grate, the rails sag and spread as it climbs slowly from the swamp toward an insufficient safety.

Days pass and weeks, and darkness once more weighs down the daylight.

And the wolves have returned to the land once more, and their howling is heard through the howling of the wind.

They come like a cold gray wave of life from the North. They are as gray as the Germans, as grim and as greedy.

And over fresh formed ice they harry hungry Germans still filling their bottomless pits in the swamp.

And the wolves are the living voices and the avid mouths of the winter hunger of the whole war-wasted land.

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The Germans go on filling and packing these running wounds in the flesh of the earth that their armies have deepened and widened.

They throw down mattresses of green fir tree boughs, and cast down carloads of gravel and earth ballast above them.

And the carloads sink and disappear as men sink and disappear in an assault till the track has crawled another rail length eastward.

Foot by foot, rail length by rail length, they fight their way eastward on toward Moscow, on toward Petrograd.

The days pass and white flakes float down like the frozen breath of famine that watches them.

A train of siege guns stands at the last hummock while the track is tested and secured before it.

Slowly they move forward at last, and as they move the sky is obscured and the blizzard has besieged them.

And the black engines are no more the work of man, but shrouded monuments of his madness measuring itself against the universe.

Every snowflake that falls is one more weight on the burdened floating bridge that breaks across the surface of the marsh.

Bullets from marauding Cossacks scar the guns and mortars slashing black scars in the white snow coating.

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Snipers appear from hiding shouting. They hold their breath that freezes suddenly.

Like a single fallen traveller sinking shapeless in the blizzard, the train is sinking.

All the strength of Essen's engines that have thundered through from Przemysl on to Kovno reels and writhes as a wounded soldier writhes in torment.

The white flakes fall and the wind ceases as the last gun shots cease.

All the works of men and their wickedness are white in the utter silence in the illimitable sanctities of a God's forgiveness.

August 31, 1915.

TEN MILLION REFUGEES

This is no sudden vivisection like Belgium's swift rape and martyrdom.

For months they have waited and foreboded; watching the skies flame redder and nearer at night.

Hearing the thunder of the guns roar louder as breakers on a beach in a rising storm roar louder surging nearer.

And ever leaner and browner regiments from the Urals and the tundra, came trampling like swimmers through shallows into the rising surf of battle.

And ever trains and groans and dripping wagon loads of wounded came rolling back like streaming stones that roll and screech across the beach in the back lash.

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So they went on planting, hoeing, reaping their crops, praying to their ikons, and saying, "But they never can come here."

And at last a score of wire drawn Cossacks on jaded horses came stringing into a street that sobbed at twilight, and drove away the Czar's share of their cattle.

And four tall Siberians on foot went East, West, South, North; plastering their houses with the little Father's last proclamation, and the last touch of human hands those walls were ever to feel.

And there was a fire in the night and another, and another, till one tall wall of flame rose in another tongue of this Pentecost of all the races of Russia, talking to the night that made them.

There was a castle on the hill and its turrets burned as their rick stacks burned.

And its false gods burned as their ikons burned, Neitzsche, Treitschke, Bernhardi, Schnitzler, burned with scrofulous prints from Paris and memoirs of seventeenth and eighteenth century royal and ennobled prostitution.

And out of the reek and smoke of the burning library came the false liberals, intellectuals, ego-nihilists, governesses, tutors, futurist poets, cubist painters, students and cadgers on the bounty of the count.

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But the count and his sons were with the army and the countess and her daughters with the imperial nurses at Petrograd.

And because these weaklings had nothing of themselves in them, they were lost and dispersed and perished utterly, with sick madmen and consumptive children in this purging of all Russia by fire and steel.

And there were others that lost themselves utterly or transiently in this driving tide of a thousand eddies from a thousand burning villages, cities and towns.

Lawyers, inspectors, police, petty nobles, small proprietors, merchants, manufacturers, teachers, doctors, shopkeepers, with their wives and kept women, their children and nurses, their servants and parasites.

All dispossessed like the peasants, and driven on and on night and day, by hunger and thirst and the fear of the fire of all Russia burning to ashes behind them.

But the ashes of Russia were alive; and like a tide that slowly tops a dyke and streams away in the plain beyond, they went on streaming from the West along the lines and roads and ruts and ridges of least resistance.

Crowding closer as the road narrowed, spreading as it opened out, turning as it turned, thrust blindly to either side where it forked by the pressure that came closest and most insistently on it.

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For man was reduced here to his lowest factors of cold and hunger and fatigue; and the human brute's ability to go on under varying pressures and privations of fatigue and cold and hunger.

And the man who struck across the fields to find food for his wife and child and failed, as he lost them suddenly or saw them dying slowly hour by hour, became a dumb and driven and a senseless and soulless beast:

Bearing man's heaviest burden at the last—himself; striving in every staggering limb, sore sinew, inch of straining lungs and griping entrails, to still stagger on.

Obsessed by the blind hypnotic drive and rhythmic drag of the road and the hordes of feet that trampled it, thrust on farther and farther to meet the ever heavier blind drag downward of the earth;

Till with the last emptiness of mind and heart; queasy belly, blurring brain, numbing nerve, with nothing left to hold up, he fell and died there.

And the women who were weaker and yet stronger in their sufferings for others, struggled on and died with them.

And the ending of the weakest always was the easiest.

Some who were beautiful gave themselves freely to Cossacks who rode by the road, sitting behind them on their horses, hugging them.

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Some who were Spartan fought and kept watch all night for their children and themselves, like cattle ringed by lean gray wolves at calving time.

Some who were nuns and prostitutes at heart, reverted instantly to type, and sold themselves for honey, tripe, turnips, sausages, to any man that cared to have them.

Some who were prostitutes gave their last mouthfuls, their last strength for days, to help a greater weakness than their own.

And some young mothers strained the frozen tears in their eyes, and the frozen blood in their veins into milk in their drying breasts to give their dying babies food.

And some who had brought their older children safe so far, went raving mad seeing a woman with a newborn babe lying naked and frozen in frozen blood by the roadside.

So they went on suffering and dying, scattering and congesting, as town on town and village on village was fired behind them.

And whatever human or inhuman appetite or passion was strongest in the ego or the mob, rose to the surface and fought and prevailed and persisted to its limit.

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Gamblers squatted by the wayside. Thieves looted the living and the dead, and the mob tortured and lynched whomsoever it pleased.

Starving peasants here gave their feeblest food, lest food be denied them in turn; rich farmers there met their fringes with curses, stones, dogs and bird shot.

And ever the Jews crept past the rest in mobs of their own at night, reviled and cursed by all, and persisting past the rest in misery that had learned to suffer longer.

And ever the babies and the youngest mothers and the youngest children died, and the oldest men and women died with them.

And as the cold of the winter came closer and sifted and slew them more and more;

As the men and boys, all but the oldest and the weakest were taken for the army to dig trenches and toil on roads and railroads;

There remained at last, when snow hid the rotting bones of Russia for a space, only the strongest of the older folk and multitudes of younger women.

Of these they say a million came to Moscow, and a million more to Petrograd.

And their faces were blank masks of misery and apathy, with every human need and prayer and passion ironed out of them.

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Only brute appetites for food and drink, warmth, shelter, rest and sleep persisted there.

And these they found doled out grudgingly in vacant barracks and exhibition halls and new barracks of planks in parks of Petrograd and Moscow and each smaller city that received and hated them.

For the war bore hard on the cities of Russia that were too full of women and children and old men before.

And these that were fit for work on the farms alone, could produce nothing, and they went on still consuming much.

As the hordes driven from the fields creep and seep into the cities, other hoards shaken by the war from the shadows begin to move:

Hoards of copper, hoards of silver, hoards of gold, of jewels, of sacred vessels, of old brocade and lace, of love and pity, piety and tenderness, and faith that gives and smiles with empty fingers.

Hoards of happiness conserved to strengthen grief, hoards of love to stand and serve where no hope is,

Hoards of science and her servants that are baffled like the bravest and the tenderest, before the magnitude of tasks that men and women must begin tomorrow.

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For after all the other ravages of war are restored, these millions of refugee women remain a menace and an incubus in the cities where there were too many women before.

For the farms rebuilding slowly cannot take and feed them all nor half of them, and more and more still come; and Siberia has turned them back already.

And day and night there breed in them the same brute appetites for food and drink and warmth that breeds fecundity,

And for the men that must come back from war at last to find them lurking in the shadows of all Russian cities;

To breed in them disease and pestilence that always lurk where men and women may not breed their children working in the open air.

And two Kaisers and their captains kill ten million men in war that wastes the world today.

And out of these five million wasted women they shall breed ten million and a hundred million tainted lives to leech the world tomorrow.

March 13, 1916.

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THE SPY

THEY found him as they advanced after the German raid
on Memel.
A moujik old and stooping, stumping and stumbling on
clumsy crutches.
One leg was rigid, its ankle always at an awkward angle
to the scrawny thigh above it.
He lived in a hut near the high road, half a verst from a
village that still was smoking.

One day the Cossacks caught him and set a red hot iron
to his twisted ankle.
And he held it rigid while he yelled and cursed them in
quavering Russian.
And they sounded the cracks and corners of his cabin with
their lances.
And they dug in the hardened earth of the floor before his
hearth and found there nothing.

There was a well-head near his hut and he sat in the sun
propped up beside it,
And he listened to the talk of the orderlies and officers who
came there for water.
Often they made him drink before them to prove that the
water was not poisoned overnight,
And he used to sit there till late at night smoking his pipe
through the April twilight.

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One night in June a young lieutenant lay in the tall grass near the well with his colonel's daughter,
Boylike, slim, in uniform, willing to fight and die with her father and with her lover.
And they lay long in silence watching the stars and dreaming and wondering as lovers will.
And at last in the silence towards midnight they heard someone near them talking a language strange to them.

They stole in the night around the well-head, one to each side, silently, as a cat steals.
And they found him on his knees talking to his God through a telephone receiver.
And the big boy caught him and held him fast. And the girl found the displaced stone, and she cut the wire and replaced the stone.
Then they took him away through the night to her father's headquarters.
And he walked as a young man walks, but his hair beneath the wig was white when they shot him next morning.

June 21, 1915.

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THE DANCE

Over the dusty Galician hills near Jaraslaw a column winds like a wounded snake.
A thousand Russian prisoners fringed by guards from Fiume plod and hang their heads.
The September sun beats hot on them. They come like cattle sweating and reeking and tainting the wind.
They march with the long enduring strength and dumb apathy of driven beasts long driven.

Noon arrives and they halt; and soup from two rusty camp kitchens on wheels is distributed.
The men squat on the dusty grass by the road munching black bread and longing dumbly for vodka and kvass.
An Austrian officer strides up and down smoking a long cigar deliberately.
The Russians look at him and they envy him his cigar far more than his freedom.

A young Cossack leaps to his feet whistling as boys whistle when school lets out.
His comrade pulls out a little pocket flute and sets his mouth and his fingers to the holes in the wood.
The young Cossack stamps his feet and flings his cap away.
He begins to dance in wide circles round the other who pivots slowly as he plays.

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He leaps into the air and whirls twice before touching the ground.
He seems to dance sitting, falling backward, crossing and uncrossing his feet and forever losing and keeping them.

He grins, he snaps his fingers, a lock of hair flaps about his forehead as he shakes his head.
He flings his arms wide and folds them, hugging his happiness to his heart.
His eyes shine and no longer is he dancing alone in the dust of Galician foot hills.
He is at home on the steppes, and the Cossack girls are laughing and singing and keeping step with him.
All the long youth of Russia wakes as he whirls, and dances with him as his shadow dances.
All the wide rapture of Russia in sunlight swirls as the dust swirls, as the wind whirls:
Invincibly.

June 15, 1915.

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ITALY

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THE RED CROSS CHAUFFEUR

He was an Italian intellectual before the war.
And his mind was a paper mosaic of surface facts in print.
And his soul saw life in a series of prismatic posters, subtly degenerate or sharply distinguished, as defectives diverge from the human norm.
He was an art critic who called the Cubists art's clumsy children; whose fancy was infatuated six weeks with the Futurists' fad for force infuriate vanquishing vacuums.
And the women that he knew wearied him as well as the men.

They seemed to him only small restless lives and feverish fingers of waste,
Fit only to fling to the winds the money the men made and stole and hoarded for them;
And to utter and reutter lies and the small change of life; as small, as soiled, as commonplace and machine made as the small five lira notes they scattered in shops.
And their audacities were as trivial as the paint life daubs on its dolls,

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As transient as chalky white powder rubbed off of life's blackboards, where he saw their small faces grow black with the night that leaked through them.

And their adulteries were as thinly spectacular as the clothes that advertised them; and their whitest bodies turned black to him with the putrefaction of their souls that spilled and spread in them.

One thing saved him from them, and the legal, political, social, financial, judicial, critical rottenness of Rome; and that was speed alone.

He had a motor car that he worshipped as he worshipped nothing else in life but the speed that informed and forever outran it.

He drove to all the great race meets of Europe. He was well known in all the drivers' training camps.

And for distances of less than an hour he could drive with the world's record holders. And above that he was useless.

He was a little man with double lensed glasses, with eyes that grew useless after more than an hour's strain in the glare of the road.

And after his third wreck in four months he was mending a broken leg in a plaster cast near Pisa, when Italy entered the war.

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He had known speed and loved her, felt her hands on his face, her breath in his nostrils, her whole body closer to his than ever woman came or would come.

He had heard her singing to him in the night, calling to him to advance the spark, till the car leapt from a hilltop straight for the middle of the Milky Way and mounted space towards it.

He had bathed in speed as a strong swimmer bathes in a cataract; and always he came back bathed and refreshed by it from the road to the hospital.

So he went to war with his car, and there the eyes men warned him would be a handicap, were no handicap at all.

For the nurse that always went with him was as immune to fear, as disdainful of danger as himself; and she always drove till the moment came to dodge the shells as a cat dodges snowballs hurled by a dozen boys at once.

And for that moment once a day or once a week he lived to the limit as he had never lived or hoped to live before.

For the shells raced faster than any car on earth, and they were the footfalls of Speed and the flash of her eyes that allured him and led him as love leads a lover.

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And he moved through the months unmindful of all else; but one day when the snow was white in the air he was aware of the face of the nurse in the car near him.

It was pale and strained and white against the snow flakes, and it was lit by a light of love from within whiter than anything else on earth.

And it seemed to race through the air near him like the face of Speed Herself; and he raced that day into a place where the Austrians were dropping ten shells a minute.

And the first time he got away with his wounded; and he saw her face near his as he started back, but the doctor at the dressing station held her by force as the car leapt away.

And the second time a shell burst close to him, half a mile from the hospital, and the splinters cut an artery in his leg and a feed tube close to his feet.

And he advanced the spark and the essence trickled slower and slower, past the slash in the tube, and he knew that life was flowing from him faster and faster through the slash in his flesh.

And the girl's face, which was the face of Speed, came closer to him as he clung to his wheel, and as the car stopped she had sprung from her hospital porch and caught him falling.

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And some said he was a hero, some a fool, when he died;
but he was only an Italian intellectual, neurotic and
semi-degenerate;
Functioning freely to the limit of the specialized life for
whose testing all Italy stands with the others at war.

March 13, 1916.

BEPPINO

TWENTY centuries of bastard Greece and Rome near
Naples bred him.
Hiero, Nero, Tiberius, Sixtus, Cæsar Borgia, lived again
in him,
Born of the scum of a slum of shadows, fostered of filth
that was the fevered breath of his nostrils.
Pander, spy, sly bully of the Camorra, perjurer, robber,
murderer for hire, and hirer of lesser murderers.

And the war came and wrecked his affairs like the affairs
of better men.
The men and the male needs and appetites of men mobi-
lized and went north to the firing line.
And there was no market for women, and no money for the
sale of women.
And the Camorra like a gorged snake lay close, and there
was neither tribute nor protection from it for him.
And he grew hungry and sick of the listless loves of his
slaves who had nothing more to offer him.

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Only Lucia was left that he had watched ripening to his hand for fifteen years;
Beautiful as a flower of the slime that time and Naples alone achieve together.
Something of the soul of Greece and Rome still lived and smiled in her.
And she worked in the war charities, and hunger and exaltation of the war were making her still more beautiful.

All of her men had gone to the war and she was left alone at his mercy.
And at last he found a foreigner and a painter who wanted a new model for his mistress.
And Beppino showed her to him and the fool bungled the business, and Lucia went frantic with terror.
And she ran madly to the railroad track with Beppino a block behind, ready to throw herself under any train that was passing.

There was a hospital train at a siding ready to start for the front.
She slipped into its white sanctuary; Beppino flattened himself on the roof of a forward car like a snake in the roof of a dove cot.
And the train rolled on through the night to Rome, and he made a nest in the night for himself in a car half filled with carboys of acids.

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And the carboys held as they crashed through the tunnels toward Florence; and Milan relayed their last iron racer to death in the north.

And at last they lay on a siding near Trent, seeing trenches ten miles away where bursting shells sprayed a surf of sound toward the summits.

The wounded were ready and red for them, and Lucia learned lessons of pain and pity the city could never teach her.

They shot two hospital orderlies for spies that day; and Beppino was found and forced to dig their graves and pitchforked into the place of one of them.

Life had made him at home in the smell of blood and the feel of filth, fit for this service essentially.

And as the hunger of his filled belly stilled, the hunger of his soul for the money Lucia had stolen from him grew greater and greater.

For her beauty grew greater daily, and he watched her in secret and grew sick and shaking with the sight of it.

Then came the day when the Austrians shelled the hospital train on its way to Milan near a culvert they wrecked.

And the tunnel was blocked behind them, and the cars became shambles that dripped, till flame licked up the drip like the last of the life that was left.

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And Lucia was left with a few of the wounded on the bare mountainside, and the shells searched them out and crept nearer and nearer.

And Beppino went mad as he lay in the wreck of the culvert, and saw the shells falling and the rocks breaking around her.

And he climbed till he caught her as she fell swooning where the last man died by her side.

And he saw she was unhurt and he held her to his heart as he climbed higher and higher toward the snow line.

And he felt that she was too fair there for war to mangle or any man on earth to sell or pollute.

And he strangled her in her swoon in the snow, and he never looked at her face again as her body fell forever down a green crack in a glacier.

Then he climbed back slowly, methodically to his feast of cruelty in the hospital;

And to long waiting till the war was over, and other women were to be had for hurting and selling.

March 29, 1916.

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THE RECESS

GIULIETTA, Elizabetta and Vittoria have escaped for a day
from the hospital.
Instead of white bandages reddening, they have seen
sunrise on snow peaks.
Instead of groaning and straining breathing, they have
known the cool stillness of the hills that heals.
Instead of the smell of blood, of decay, of disinfectants
that deadened them,
They have breathed a sky-full of summer, cloudless and
luminous.

They have stripped off womanhood that came before their
time with the grime on their garments.
They have found a pool like a shining epaulette on a
shoulder of the hills that march toward Austria.
They are naked Pagan girls and chattering children again
there;
Splashing one another with water that glitters, and thread-
ing red berries for bracelets and necklaces.

July 16, 1916.

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THE TRANSPORT

Women with children clinging to them cluster on a dockend
at Brindisi,
Watching the stern of a transport crowded and dumb
that slowly swings away from the world.
The last cheering has ceased, and the last casting away of
cables and ropes that thrilled through them,
Like the beginning of an amputation that death and the
years have yet to accomplish.

Handkerchiefs flutter from their fingers like the fluttering
of nerves before the opiates and the knife have done
their work.
And the sense of an immense and an irreparable loss lies
heavy on them as the steamer merges with the mist
at the mouth of the harbor.
And grimy handkerchiefs grow wet and grimier still, and
children cry because they are hungry and cold, and
because they see their mothers' tears and feel their
trembling.
But the taller boys tug at the hands that hold them,
straining and staring toward the pier head and the
gray sea road that stretches beyond.

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For the youth of Italy has awakened at last, and her ships
are ferrying forth across the Adriatic to Avlona and
the mountains that menace it.
As the triremes of Scipio and Cæsar once set forth, as the
galleys of Genoa, Venice, Pisa and Palermo ravaged
and ruled the seas; and carried the war to Africa, to
Carthage and Bysantium.
And weaker hearts hark back to the women on the pier,
but stronger spirits throng to the bow of the *Citta
de Roma;*
Beautiful and dimly seen, a tense embodied dream of steel
and disciplined ideal of Italy today at her harbor
mouth;
Breasting the waves of this sea of mist and submarines,
like some strong swimmer through a stroke's eternity.

November 16, 1916.

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AUSTRIA

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THE MONASTERY

An Austrian column has camped in a pine wood and set its fires ablaze up the hill.
At the foot of the slope is a monastery of twenty monks; this morning immune to the world.
A new virus of virile and violent life has begun to germinate in the grayest soul that grew still in the shadows here.
And the youngest monk, looking at the campfires climbing the hill, thinks of the candles he lights on his altar at Easter.

Grain and wine have been requisitioned for the army, and the monks who are Austrian too, have given them willingly.
They have given their chapel and their refectory for hospital wards for the wounded and the sick.
And some of them stare restlessly from the shadows of the porch, impelled to give more in an orgy of giving that grips at them.
Feeling like women in lonely houses who give themselves and all they have gladly to lovers war gives them for a night.

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A landwehr lieutenant who has played in the concert halls of the world, has found the fiddle of the novice who lights tall white candles.

He plays in the chapel for the sick, slow music Palestrina made pity eternal for men.

He walks through the cloisters clasping the key to all locks of the spirit and turning it round in men's hearts.

He comes to the door and the Austrian hymn pealing out through the porch starts a singing that spreads through the forest.

And the singing rises and falls and dies in distance and darkness at last.

And he stands in the open under the trees, where the stars and the shadows call to him and all his hearers.

He begins to translate the call of the stars and the whispers of shadows into truth no creed and no church or chapel walls can contain.

He plays to them motives from the folk songs of his boyhood and the boyhood of every man whose mother sang the song of life itself to him.

And the novice stands in the shadows of the crumbling porch, listening and lost in the music.

He stands in the porch of a new life opening to him as simply and inevitably as sunrise opens all heights and all ways through the world.

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He knows that no ten or twenty men can prison God and man today in houses made with hands in a hole in the forest.

He knows that war is only one red key life turns when all others fail in the darkened doors of her prisons.

He knows tomorrow he must go forth with the multitudes who march to find her face forever; and finding, are spent in the seeking.

March 17, 1916.

THE OPERATION

He had no illusions about the war and Austria's share in the war.

He refused to go to the front with the other great surgeons, saying, "Some one must stay home to train new men needed a year and two years from now."

And the other big men laughed at him; surgeons and strategists, merchants and journalists, pointing him out at the club and in the street.

He fought duel after duel till they let him alone, taking life swiftly and cleanly with his sword as he saved it with his scalpel.

But he never fought with young men fit for war, only with their elders and the titled degenerates that he loathed as he loathed a malignant tumor.

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Gradually he was left to himself and the work of his staff of boy surgeons and nurses.

Gradually the men went away, and the sons of his brain and old age taught by him to pioneer the world's advance in surgery and research were taken from him.

Gradually the wrecks came back and he toiled through eternal hackwork of repairing and refitting incompetent and broken parts.

He toiled with electrical machines and mastered them, and sent new currents of life thrilling through torn nerves and severed sinews.

And constantly he sent his most beautiful and intricate miracles of healing back to be butchered again.

Gradually the women walked into his life and were around him everywhere.

He had always believed that one woman in a million is a born surgeon, and no more than one.

He had always believed that modern life brutalizes women as war brutalizes all men but the finest and strongest.

He saw himself surrounded by women bacteriologists, women anæstheticisers, women internes and women assistants everywhere.

He saw them set themselves to be hard in work that they hated, in work that he had always loved before.

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And it hurt him more to work with them, than to fail with the finest body that war had ever mangled and sent back broken to his hands.

He began to feel that he was operating with only a claw of a thumb and one finger left on each hand.

He began to feel that all surgery in Vienna for the next fifty years was fated to work pitiably as he was working.

There was one woman that seemed to him harder than any man he had seen with a scalpel in his hand.

And because she was competent beyond the rest she came in time to be his chief assistant.

And it enraged him that she was beautiful as women are rarely beautiful;

Fine in every line and hair and nerve of her, and fit to be the mother of heroes and still finer mothers of stronger heroes.

And she seemed to him like a thoroughbred racehorse chained to a butcher cart.

And he began to feel that he must break her or be broken himself.

He began to scheme to shake her and to break her and he began to succeed,

And they began to operate one day and she trembled and bungled, and he drove her and cursed her who had never cursed man or woman in his work before.

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She grew whiter and whiter, she moved slower and slower, and at last she dropped and lay in a heap at his feet.

And the orderlies carried her out as he tied his arteries; and he went on with all the strength he had torn from her and finished his operation triumphantly alone.

As he was washing his hands, his head nurse came to him raging and telling him it was her friend's lover's life he had saved.

He drove her from him and disciplined her. He went up to his study and sat down there alone with his head in his hands.

And as he brooded a passion of tears broke from him as pus breaks from an ulcer when a lancet's point pierces it.

And he understood that life was operating on him, and he sat there motionless in his chair and let it work its will with him.

After the space of two hours he walked out quietly and went up to the ward where the woman sat by her lover's bedside.

He looked at the chart and took the pulse and the temperature and the respiration, mechanically, knowing that all went well with them.

He brought a chair and placed it close to the woman's and sat down and held out his hand to her,

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And she looked at him curiously, and shrank and stiffened,
and then suddenly moved by something vital operating in her, she laid her hand in his.
And as they sat there they began to feel that God sends His wars into the world for its healing, to estrange His stronger souls;
Slashing their passions apart to the quick as a knife slashes a wound:
And then invincibly, with the sure healing of time, bringing them back inevitably, indissolubly together.

March 16, 1916.

MITZI

Mitzi sits clipping the tattered newspapers and frayed sporting sheets from the Café *Zum Sterne*.
And another young night life of Wien is piling them up twenty deep and lacing them up into huge paper blankets for soldiers.
And two nuns tack them up into vast shallow bags of gray gingham besmeared with blue roses in wreaths.

Mitzi resents the grayness and the blueness bitterly.
And she bitterly resents the greasy blackness of the fat nun's robes and the dingy whiteness of her coif;
And the air of perpetual fasting, and incense and unwashed flesh, of poor blood and bad breath, that the thin one with pimples brings with her.

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And dimly she resents the spritual snobbery of these women and their air of professional martyrdom that maddens her.

Some one once said she would die a nun herself, and she shrieked and struck him with a carafe in the café across the way.

Mitzi thrusts a scurrilous chromo of a nude woman between two blear eyed soldiers under the nose of the thin nun and snatches another sheet.

She forgets the pimpled face where pride says "You are dirt like this printed dirt and it is my virtue that I suffer you!"

Mitzi sees a picture of a handsome lad in the Kaiser's Hungarians who gave her a whole happy day at Schonbrun once.

Next to him is a brute and a beast who had her the night they mobilized and beat her, beating her wages down to five kronen in paper.

And they are both dead for Austria in Serbia like the handsomest one who sent her the postcards and Serbian knife from Belgrade.

Mitzi bitterly resents her own black clothes and half starved air that are the outward and visible signs of the war in her.

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She is half gypsy, half Viennese, slim, dark, with a blue-eyed vividness and shy violence that has grown stark from the gutter and so far foraged successfully for itself.

And the war so far has only half tamed her, half starved her, half wasted her small hoard of gold that she hides between two fire bricks in a garret where she finds no fire to burn.

She is lean and lithe as a gutter cat, with the half starved gutter cat's intense vitality in the undiminished and time-hardened hungry half of her.

There is a husky half purr in her throat still as she stands up and stretches, bidding big Bertha bring more papers quickly and Big Bertha startled, gets up quickly and goes and fetches them.

Mitzi sits down and clips furiously with her scissors, thinking of the Revolution in France and the guillotine and the nuns and the Austrian Antoinette.

She remembers the kings and queens that were the beginning of wars in her history books, and she wonders what the end of them in this one will be.

She wonders what the end of it all will be for her in a Vienna without either money or men enough to go around.

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She goes out at the end of her day's work and glares venomously at women chauffeurs, women train conductors, women sweepers, women in the places of men everywhere.

She turns from them to a hat shop harping on shop girls, chorus girls, opera singers, women of title, fast women of wealth and the underworld, who were her bitter business rivals in the old bright night life of waste that is ended.

And she knows that women may be brutes more merciless than men to other women in the other wars of sex and hunger life is always waging.

And she knows that the day is coming when the hand of every married woman in Vienna and every one who hopes to be married, will be lifted implacably against her.

And she sees one of the new policewomen standing in a square; and she spits at her behind the woman's back!

And she sees a girl child at a window killing flies and she hates that girl child as she hates the other.

For Mitzi is a fly herself, with the flame in her wings wasting and dying, that fed on offal and bred in offal for centuries.

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She is a plague of flies that must be ended in every capital of chaos where West makes war on East.

Mitzi remembers police spies, police inspectors, police judges and surgeons, and the tribute she paid them in money, and as her kind can pay in kind.

Sometimes a kiss or caress, a jest or a gesture, an hour, a night, a year or more of her working time.

And Mitzi sees in front of her the policewoman who must come to demand money of her alone and always money, and never love so long as they both live.

Mitzi climbs her five flights of stairs; she peers from her window and sees the shadow of the policewoman passing and repassing outside.

She bars her door, masks her keyhole, draws her shades, kneels and feels her gold behind cold fire bricks in her hearth.

Mitzi kindles scraps that she has filched from the pictured and printed life of the town and sees the flare die down as she kneels there.

Mitzi rests her head on her hands on the bricks before her hoard, and feels for the little Serbian knife in its sheath sewed to the garter her last lover gave her.

Mitzi gathers her gutter soul as she kneels on her empty hearth and she shudders interminably in the shadow of the policewoman waiting to exterminate her.

March 12, 1916.

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DIMINUENDO

An old man stands alone by a grand piano in a great room in Vienna.
There is dust on the wood, on the keys, on the floor and on the folds of tall half-drawn curtains.
And the grime and the grayness of life show in his rough shaved face, and the close clipped edges of cuffs no more immaculate.
And in the score of an untried sonata that lies where he dropped it in the dust two days ago.

He sits down and lays his hands listlessly upon the keys.
He lays his head on his hands that cling like a priest's to an altar where he offers up everything.
He seems to hold the cold hands of a friend that dies, and the skeleton fingers of an hour that has passed beyond desire or hope.
He lifts his head and stares blankly through shadowy curtains to a still and empty street.

Dry leaves eddy there, and vague wraiths drift through still and empty spaces in his mind.
And an inconstant procession of his pupils for the last ten years appears by fits and starts.
Hundreds of his countrymen and women to whom he preached that the heart knows no frontiers and art no nationality;

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A huge Russian's hands of a blacksmith turned Apollo, an English lad's fingering facile and swift as the play of the sunlight on rapids at noon;
Talent in a French girl's lips that spelled their love of music silently, in wistful smiles;
Genius in a Jew's keen eyes, who seized the center of the universe in sound and held it trembling at his finger-tips through ten eternal seconds.
All the compassion of a million misereres in an Italian widow's soul that kneeling nakedly, looked up through streaming eyes.
And the child's laughter and the kitten's coaxing of two small Americans of whom he made two perfect little phonographs of facile phrasing.

He sits staring and wishing that even the smallest and most frivolous American was back again,
For she learned quickly, who had so little to be right or wrong with, and she was as perfect a type of human expression to its limit, as the Jew was.
And he sits there thinking of the others, of the Germans and Austrians, the French and Russians, the English and Italians, Belgians and Serbs;
All to whom he taught harmony, murdering others and themselves; all that live still studying strenuously to murder more.

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And he seems to hear all war's horrors suddenly under a microscope of sound shaking him with a passion neither Beethoven nor Palestrina could ever begin to suggest.

And the cold fit suddenly comes and grips him as he clings to the keys in a silence beyond all sound,
And all things grow small and crucially distinct; and he remembers his little American girl again.
And he begins to make music in miniature, like a minuet of Mozart's, refined to tones and semitones that quiver in the drone of a mosquito or a midge.
And an art microscopic and sure as Japanese carving in ivory possesses him as he composes and transposes his Doll's Wedding March.
And he grows silent again as the light begins to go again.
And all his youth and the years beyond youth that he has wasted and mislaid, gather themselves for one last appeal to life,
And all the small tragedy of a child's heart betrayed and at war with the universe resounds through the room, as his hands record the poignant plaintiveness of the Dirge for a Doll.

March 15, 1916.

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SERBIA

Digitized by Google

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THE TRAP

TWICE they thrust back Austria in bitter slaughter from their mountain tops.
For freedom holds the hills for Serbia, freedom her foster father, throttling down death in the dark.
Now a mob that was an army once is plodding through a snowbound pass to torment.
And every step they take is a station of the cross in the Calvary of a race crucified for men on the mountains.

The snow is red with blood where they tread on it, and their bandages are black and stiff with frozen blood.
Their eyes are holes of hate where horror stares from faces grown as grim and gray as are the rocks around them.
Their entrails are as empty as the empty rifles that they trail and clutch for crutches.
Their minds are empty of revenge, fear, murder, lustings, all things but the utter need of dying brutes that drives them.

The mountains are immense, white, imminent, and cold and hard as the clenched hands of death that hold them.
And his breath is hot on their trail when the Bulgars find the range for a mountain battery that smokes and snarls above them.

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The shells fall and shatter the rocks where he treads;
they print huge tracks in tainted snowdrifts that
they still struggle through.
And the sky clouds with a smother of snow, and lets down
a sullen and leaden lid on the trap.

February 10, 1916.

THE MASSACRE OF MOTORS

Six hundred Serbian boys under fifteen swooned and
agonized at Isbek,
Out of a thousand snared from Pristina, stumbling strug-
gling through the blizzard.
Dragging men's rifles made to murder birds and squirrels
and half starved rabbits alone;
Six hundred out of thirty thousand murdered in the
mountains, filing past slowly into the blinding pall of
white.

Human things that were starving and suffering more
terribly trailed behind the motor cars.
Where the motors were starved and were weakened on
the steep and snow clogged trails.
The fire in them froze and their steel hearts beat faint as
the spark thinned and the last petrol failed.
Till at the top of the hill where the trail twists as it falls
to the river, the word went out to destroy them.

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Some of the soldier chauffeurs had saved bombs for this purpose or that.
They set their time fuses and sprinted from sudden geysers of noise and of flame.
And one Italian volunteer with a truer instinct for tragedy,
Set his car at the turn of the trail at the third speed, and then leapt from it as it started.

And the mountains as old as the matter in the motors and the mind that conceived this saw a new and terrible finale,
To the drama of bursting shells and breaking hearts in a nation's martyrdom;
Looked down through the snow that beat as it fell on a cataract of Cadillacs, Fiats, Fords, Diamlers, Peugeots, Lancias; falling, splashing over the cliff;
Plunging in fragments as spray scatters, shattered on the rocks and the sands of the river.

Soldiers in blood stained sheepskins stood staring at this murder newer and more mad than the daily and nightly murdering of men and boys.
One with the heart of a hillman and a poet exulted,
Seeing the mountains and the storm shaking away the machines that were strangling the bend;
And as the last huge Mercedes went roaring and crashing from a cliff face into the abyss,

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"There goes Germany at last," he shouted, aiming and sending bullet after bullet to follow it.

And his comrades thought he was mad, as so many had become already and were yet to become.

August 3, 1916.

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MONTENEGRO

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VERA

SHE was the last and the least of the last refugees, from the last and the least of the war martyred nations.

Starving men gave her their last shreds of food as they tramped from Cetigne and doubled and dodged past Scutari.

Men lying dying reached up, handing half inches of life that was hot in the dregs of canteens, passing the torch to her hands as they passed.

Women that faltered and froze on their feet, wrapped her in garments of life that wore thin in the ice of the blizzard.

Bullets fell dead at her feet and she clambered past torrents that tore through the ice on red bridges and dams of the dead.

Rocks that were shaken by shells stayed their fall till her light tread crept childishly past.

Snowslides before and behind her shrank by her like wolves that were gorged with the wounded.

Still she went on through the night to the light, that showed her black vultures above her Black Mountain.

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Still she went on up the shell shattered pass, past the dead,
to the summit, and panting and crawling,
Saw half the world changed to sea in a second where
mountains dive down in league long waves of stone:
Saw a half circle of steel gray horizon below like a limitless
wide road to freedom;
Crept down the grade, rolled and fell past the rocks,
dashed her light weight down and drank from snow
water.

Light came and warned her and showed her her road and
a Bulgar patrol came and lifted her up.
She was a child and too small for their spoiling; she was a
child and they warmed her and fed her;
Bound up her bruises and washed her stained face and
lifted her high on their shoulders and loved her.
Carried her safe in their arms when she slept, and smiled
when she waked and she whispered "Durzazo."

Showed her her trail leading still to the sea; cheered when
she went while they watched from the mountains.
So she came down to the old port at last. There was a
ship loaded down to the guards.
There was the last boat just leaving the quay, turning
once more to the shore when they saw her.
There was a woman whose arms opened wide; there was
the place of a dead child she filled there.

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There was a storm whose strength died as she came; there was a submarine peril that missed her.
There was a shadow that darkened the sky; there was a singing in heaven above her,
And she saw the men flying in air, and in wonder she smiled at sea fountains where bombs burst in beauty.
And she saw strange destroyers that circled around her and brought her at last like a queen to Brindisi.

There was a friend of her father that found her; there was a queen of her country that kissed her,
There was a villa whose windows looked eastward and seaward and homeward to scarred Montenegro.
There were war orphans who made her their playmates; there was a garden that claimed her and cured her;
Just one pale slip of a girl time transplanted to live to her day to be mother of heroes.

March 18, 1916.

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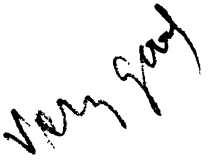

Very good

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TURKEY

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IN ARMENIA

THE desert is hunger here, savage and insatiable.
And the sunrise is the beginning of a madman's thirst
that makes mirages,
In the mind of an American missionary who lies on his
heap of sheep skins at the top of a cliff near Kermagh-
Boghasy;
Seeing the cinders of a Titan's gridiron of torture rekindled
in every shard of color in the valley below;
Watching his Kurdish servant lighting a little cooking fire
of withered grasses and shredded camel dung on a
rock ledge beneath him.

He remembers as his broken leg burns and grates when he
moves,
An empty Armenian house at Endere and an inscription
on the walls;
*Our home is on the mountain top, we no longer need a
room;*
*We have already drunk the draught of death; we no longer
need a judge.*

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He remembers the first mob of women and children driven into Ezeroum from Harput;
And the German nurse who wanted so dreadfully to believe that the German consul had nothing to do with all those organized massacres and endless drives to death.
And he hears her soft south-German accents slurring and breaking as she told him how they came;
Ragged, filthy, half naked, starved, sick, falling and flogged and goaded like dying cattle to struggle to their feet and fall again and again;
Fed like cattle with dusty hay, and clubbed till they died when they struggled like cattle to snatch at it.

He remembers the nurse's tears as she told of the doctors who segregated the strongest and the prettiest girls for seraglios in Broussa and Stamboul;
And the clamor of despair of the others who were left who tore their hair and their flesh, shrieking and sobbing, *Save us!*
We are willing to become Moslems or Germans or whatever you want us to become;
Only save us! We are to be taken to Kermagh-Boghasy to be beheaded!

He remembers the look on the German woman's face as she turned to him and said,
"You are an American, and a man, and a missionary, and you speak the language.

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What can you do? What are you going to do? What will your people and your president do?"
And he remembers thinking as he stole away that Judgment Day had indubitably come to Ezeroum and all earth as horribly as to him.

He remembers hours and days of blood-lust, fire and pillage, raping and madness where he lost himself;
The mad priest in his minaret who shot more than two hundred of the women and boys and girls as they were driven past him;
The cultured and humane Moslems who sheltered him and who wept as they told him of these things;
And who protested time and time again that not the Turkish but the German government had ordered these massacres and this annihilation.

Stray phrases and blinding visions of this madman's dream of a martyrdom of a nation come back to him;
Words of a Turkish gendarme who said, "Why should we kill them at home?
They must be made miserable and must be driven where we need not smell them or be forced to make them bury each other;"

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Visions of girls pleading for poison or lancets or needles from German and Turkish doctors as they checked them off;
Drippings of puddles of blood from ledges in places where the dead had been taken away the day before when the bowlder fell on him.

The sun rises higher, and below him eyes of death in vultures' heads are hovering and gathering to this valley in the desert;
And like the last of the last herd in a summer and winter of drought, the last of the last three thousand from Erzingan come stumbling down the defile at the head of the valley.
The Kurdish servant puts his fire out and hides behind a rock crossing himself and cursing furtively.
And his master sees the gendarmes and their helpers lining up the women and girls along the low cliffs that fence in the far side of their death trap;
Ten gendarmes with their German rifles, and a mob of men and boys with knives and stones from the nearest villages.
And he hears the first rifle shot: and sees the doll's figures running and stumbling and kneeling and falling.

And in the colder intensity of his fever as a cloud comes over the sun,
He feels as far away, in his half mile of width, and his hundred feet of height in the air, from it all,

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As any of the men and women, monarchs and ministers, over mountains and over sea, who have suborned and suffered this thing to be.

And as the sun comes out again and the last shrieks and strangling sobbings have ceased, and as his fever grips him;

He lifts himself on one elbow and shakes one fist in the face of the sun and cries and curses them all:

Kaiser, President, Senator, Secretary; Geheimrath, Chancellor, Oberst; Pasha, Mullah and madmen who have brought this shame on the faces of God and of men today.

And as the voice of his weakness and the madness of its fever ceases,

As the last Kurd throws his last stone at senseless flesh that shudders still.

The vultures are falling down their black funnel of famine on the mountain tops.

And clouds of flies are gathering to cover the carrion as the German armies gathered and swarmed over Serbia and Belgium.

And the hunger and thirst of the desert drinks in the blood that drips drop by drop, as it drinks the drops of rain that falls at last;

To cool the face of a martyred and tormented land where man the master of toxins and tides annihilates himself.

November 17, 1916.

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BULGARIA

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THE PROPHET

The old horse scarred with bullets at Chactalja staggers and sways as he goes.

The lean ox thrusts his galled shoulders against the yoke, and limps nearer to butchery and the pause for breath at the end of the field.

The old Bulgar peasant straightens his furrow, and drives past the flank of the foothill into a hollow of shadow where the clay clots and the plow moves slower till it stops.

And the plow shears through, till the ranks of furrows roused and marching are more than the space of earth asleep in the fallow.

The sun climbs high and steams in the incense of earth, a slow wind wafts away, like the smoke and the reek of war,

Skylarks choir over a ritual older than any men made in the churches war sweeps from the world of today.

Furrow on furrow, forward and back, makes response as the plowing advances.

Three old frail lives, fated to sacrifice, tramp in a swaying processional nearer an altar of stone and the shadow of a cliff that falls from the side of the valley to the west.

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From the west and the south near Saloniki comes the low bellow of guns.
And the old horse hears it and quickens his stride for a step and the ox shakes his head and then settles to shoulder the yoke.
The old man lifts his chin half an inch, the old eyes seem to see his sons at Tchactala dying with the domes of the city in sight.
And the old head suddenly sags, and the old shoulders bow themselves once more lower and nearer to the earth that always waits for them.

Time has plowed his face and weathered it and made him one with the earth.
It has made him a high priest whose worship is wasted for a time in a nation of peasants mocked and betrayed by war lords and lying diplomats.
It has made him a prophet of men marching on through seasons of sorrow and loss, sowing new life for the world as he goes.
Sure that whatever else shall fail, the life of the grain shall grow from the blackness of earth, to fruition,
And in the faith that holds him to his plowshare scribing the oldest gospel of all, is the love that man's prophets with plowshares and shells to the hearts of the heathen proclaim.

March 20, 1916.

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ROUMANIA

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THE ASSIZE

THERE is a gap in a row of houses in a residence street in Bucharest:
Pieces of a German bomb from a Parsival lie mixed with blackened blood and rotting flesh in the hole that was the basement.
The roof is gone and the floors are gone, but the side walls and the back wall remain.
On one side there are traces of the stairs by which happy people once mounted to love and birth and death undesecrated.

On one wall on the third floor a portrait of Carmen Sylva hangs with its glass still unshattered.
In one corner of what was once the nursery a bird cage is suspended from a crumbling patch of ceiling.
It sways slightly in the wind as two idlers watch it, but the bird that once sang to them and all the world from his swinging porch is silent.
It is the fourth day since the bomb fell, and he lies on the floor of his cage, a huddled and motionless heap of feathers that war has made a mystery.

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And a woman sobbing her heart out for her husband and her baby who sang to her,
Joins with four million more women and widows in Roumania and all Europe and her colonies,
Passionately and persistently demanding an accounting of God and man,
Against some man that here did murder at midnight to manhood.

October 26, 1916.

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ENVOY

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OUR SHARE

AMERICA, last mother of all earth,
Defiled and thwarted by man's sins today,
Wasted by women, frail, unfit to pray;
Now while old ties and treaties tremble, fall away,
While through black midnights maddened millions still must kill and cause to slay,
Till God's tomorrow lives at last through the grim throes of battle's birth:

Now while the world makes war by land and sea,
When from God's throne of glory in the air,
Into decision's valley, past each prayer
Of fighting man and child and mother trembling there,
The shells of judgment bear despair; mother of earth where stands thy share
In man's last fight for love and light, for faith and larger liberty?

We see thy sins and thy first sufferings,
We were not strong and sure. We were not wise.
Unfit, unready, we put faith in lies.
Here children starve. Despairing here man's spirit dies.

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Even as Belgium we were weak. The guiltless still we sacrifice
Till dies our greed and listlessness, and land and glory lust of kings.

Here food and work we waste, like land and gold.
We were not armed and fit, the right's right hand.
More women walk our streets. More workers stand
Idle and empty handed, waiting God's command,
"Send food and life to all my earth." Our women wasted life. We planned
To sell thee like our harlots where our honor and our souls we sold.

Therefore our share comes back to us again.
We were not fit and fine. And we must pay
For Belgium's rape; for England's fear today;
For war's wild fury wiping farms and faith away;
For lies and lusts let loose and crowned with blood stained steel. Our truth they slay
Thy mother, Mother, till we rise, and out of ruins make us men.

October 16, 1914.

Printed in the United States of America

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THE following pages contain advertisements of a few of the Macmillan books on kindred subjects.

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EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON'S NEW BOOK

Merlin

By EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

"Edwin Arlington Robinson during the last few years has come to be considered by many the leading American poet of the generation now reaching its artistic maturity. It is safe to predict that his popularity will increase rather than diminish." It was *The New York Times* that made this statement shortly after the appearance of Mr. Robinson's last book of verse, *The Man Against the Sky*. This, and the added fact that *The Times* in this opinion but voices the verdict of critics everywhere, lends importance to the publication of Mr. Robinson's new book, *Merlin*, a narrative poem, which will be found quite as valuable a contribution to American letters as any of its author's previous works. Mr. Robinson's theme is the Arthurian legend to which he has brought the originality which his readers have come to expect of him and which he has adorned with all the arts of the great poet that he truly is.

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WILFRID WILSON GIBSON'S NEW BOOK

Livelihood: Dramatic Reveries

By WILFRID WILSON GIBSON
Author of "Daily Bread," etc.

Cloth, 12mo, $1.25

Here Wilfrid Wilson Gibson gives us another book much in the manner of his first success—*Daily Bread.* Under the title of *Livelihood* he writes of common, ordinary things, and of people whose lives are, for the most part, bound up in the making of a living. The collection includes *The Shaft,* dealing with a miner who lost his way in deep, dark, underground passages, and almost perished; *The Orchestra,* of a fiddler in a theatre orchestra; *The Blast Furnace,* a gripping bit of tragedy; *Makeshifts,* with its philosophy of humble life, and *The Lamp,* a powerful narrative of the sea and of a wife who waited vainly for her husband's return.

"Mr. Gibson is a poet of the people, a lyricist who penetrates the heart of humanity."—*Review of Reviews.*

"Mr. Gibson is a genuine singer of his own day and turns into appealing harmony the world's harshly jarring notes of poverty and pain."—*The Outlook.*

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The Road to Castaly

By ALICE BROWN
Author of "Children of Earth," "The Prisoner," etc.

Readers of *Children of Earth*, and of many other of Miss Brown's books for that matter, must have seen many an evidence about them of the really natural poet. Some years ago, furthermore, she published a little collection of verse which was warmly received by the critics, and which served to intensify the desire for more. This volume, then, will be welcome to Miss Brown's admirers, and to literature lovers generally. It contains the earlier poems referred to, which were, as a matter of fact, also issued under the title of *The Road to Castaly*, and much new material as well—the poet's latest and most mature work.

Poems

By RALPH HODGSON

Ralph Hodgson, to whom the Edward de Polignac prize was recently awarded, already has many admirers in this country who will welcome the publication of this selection from his writings. The volume includes Mr. Hodgson's best and latest work, and shows him to be a poet of rare feeling and power.

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Yzdra

By LOUIS V. LEDOUX

New Edition

Mr. Ledoux's *The Story of Eleusis*, published last year, has been commended by critics of poetry, and lovers of the classic drama. *Yzdra*, which now follows it, will be found no less worthy. It deals with a Princess who is supposed to have acquired the quality of poisoning. She is sent by King Poros, her father, to poison Alexander the Great. She falls in love with Alexander and he with her, and rather than fulfill her mission she kills herself. In Mr. Ledoux's hands this becomes a theme of power and to it he brings his great skill as poet and dramatist.

A Play by Sir Rabindranath Tagore

The Cycle of Spring: A Play

By SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Cloth, 12mo, $1.25

This, the latest and richest of the author's plays, was recently performed in the courtyard of his Calcutta home by the masters and boys of Shantiniketan. The success was immense: and naturally, for the spirit of the play is the spirit of universal youth, filled with laughter and lyric fervour, jest and pathos and resurgence: immortal youth whose every death is a rebirth, every winter an enfolded spring.

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Men, Women and Ghosts

By AMY LOWELL

Boards, $1.25; Leather, $1.60

This collection of stories in verse gives free rein to Miss Lowell's versatile imagination and the result is a new demonstration of her genius, a book the individual pieces of which, whether written in old form or new, are all instinct with force and fire.

"Probably the most perfect piece of imagism Miss Lowell, or any of the imagists, for that matter, has accomplished . . . perhaps the best collection the author has yet published."—*Chicago Evening Post.*

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